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THE CARDINAL'S PAWN.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"UP and hence!" Fiamma took a step from her husband's side as her impatient lips shaped the words. Her eyes were tawny-gold, her cheeks carnation, her whole slender body a-quiver with the excitement of a mettled racer that sees the course. "Up, up, and hence!" she repeated urgently. "We must race to-night and win."

"Win an ounce of brains and divide them fairly between us, for faith, I feel to need some," answered Talbot. "What's your hurry, and to race whom and to win what? That's the riddle that I'm cracking my old wits upon."

"To Florence, and before the Capelli! Trust me, you shall hear afterwards," answered Fiamma, dragging in an agony at the strength opposed good-humouredly to her.

"Why chuck, never talk of dividing the brains, for, by Boston Stump, you'll need all you get!" Talbot laughed, drawing her back into the cool *loggia*. "Will you, after all, ride with your sister-in-law to the Florence where she was so keen that we should not go, that you are hot-foot to overtake her party? Troth, if we did, your haste would not have made many yards before the robin red-breasts could set to work burying us in leaves."

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"'Tis true, but the delay tortures me," groaned Fiamma, sinking on the couch in the room where the Capelli had been. "We must watch them out of sight and then—but what chance brought you together!"

"Fegs! she was the early bird who got the worm. When I found myself in the thick of all the company as I left the forest, I thought the birdling I had left behind would be the safer for giving no hint of her. So it was I fell in with madonna's hospitality, and learnt how she had set out in a hurry from Venice, lest the talk of the plague should knock at the gates of Florence before her, and how a freak of hers had forbidden news of her coming, since Cassandra once prophesied to her that she should be met in her state entry by Death."

Fiamma had drawn his arm about her, turning her face away from his eyes as he went on. Womanly pride and wifely loyalty forbade her asking an explanation of her having found the Capelli at her husband's feet, but the recollection rankled. Talbot pressed her closer. "But with your coming the fat fell in the fire, and the devil said *Amen*; for I had fought off Mrs. Bianca's invitations that I would hoist sails for Florence with her."

"Though she asked you on her knees!" the words rushed of themselves from Fiamma's lips.

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Talbot bent down to look straight in her eyes. "I can tell you no more, sweetheart," he said quietly. "Fly-blown piece of goods though she be, she's a woman still, and no man worth the name would make a boast of what a woman, were she Queen of Sheba or Doll Groat-o'-Nights, thought of him."

Fiamma yielded to his kiss and smiled into the eyes holding hers so strongly. The two kept silence, each busy in thought with the strange interview, a growing puzzle knitting Talbot's brows.

"Riddles roost in your company," he said, stroking the tangled curls where the wildwood crown still drooped. "The matter was plain sailing enough till you came in to it, but with you came the mysteries. Why should the Capelli wish to turn us aside from Florence, now, and why should she press a night's hospitality here upon us?"

Fiamma glanced cautiously around before she answered. The monotonous croaking of the frogs in their watery kingdom, and the buzz of a wasp among the figs blackening against the wall, almost drowned the whisper, which she dared make no louder, of what still must be done in the Cardinal's service.

Talbot whistled and nodded as he listened. "I'll wager the first hawk I unhood over the fens again, that madonna has her guess of something of all this," he said. "Italian that she is, she does not find it in her heart to believe that you would lay aside your scheme of vengeance, even if she does not guess that a strong hand at your back is moving to checkmate her. Well, sweetheart, I will not fairly stomach the notion of setting the dogs on a woman whose sins, as she says, are past and done with, but since you made yourself a pawn for this Cardinal in his game, I sup-

pose you must play your move." He rose as if the movement were distasteful to him, keeping his arm, however, about the girl as they walked down the *loggia* towards the courtyard opening on the causeway.

"They must have entered the forest by now unless their horses cry cousins with snails," he was saying as they stepped out from the screen of climbing plants and thick bushes to the open beyond. Then he stopped abruptly, rubbing a hand over his eyes as though clearing them from a dream. Around the house, among the roots of green growing things, a broad water was dimpling in the sunshine, stretching from their feet to the sombre wall of forest that set a black boundary to its ripples. A single dragonfly, like a bared stiletto, flickered hither and thither over the sunny lake as though seeking the white and gold lily-cups that lay below the blue shining surface. "She has cut the dykes," the Lincolnshire man said sharply.

Fiamma, hardly able to free her mind from fancies of enchantment or mirage, looked questioningly at the face bent on the ripples. Here and there swirls of turbid water, or a green branch rising to the surface, told of the recent inrush of the flood, but the water washing quietly a foot below the terrace had reached its height. As the fact dawned upon Talbot the fear that had leapt into his face gave place to bewilderment.

"It's why and wherefore with a vengeance," he said turning to the girl. "The water can rise no further, —I see the flood-mark—so Mistress Bianca could not have hoped to drown us like otters in our hole. I thought there was mischief in our pretty hostess's look when she spoke of our not flouting her roof; but what's her object in forcing us in this fashion to lodge under it?"

"'Tis a more evil one than the

delaying us in our journey, for she had a qualm at the last in leaving you in the trap she had set," cried Fiamma, with a swift intuition of the meaning in the Capelli's gesture of hand-washing. "If it had been possible to have brought the doom, be it what it may, that threatens us, on me alone, she would have done it."

"I owe her no thanks for that," returned Talbot, holding her closer as he drew a pistol from his belt. "Perhaps, though, when she could strike at her ease in the forest it's not likely she would set her mind on having us done to death here; but she may have left a dagger behind her; let's play *I spy* for such a one while daylight lasts."

Over the pavilion they went, clasped like lovers, but keen as hunters, passing through room after room with its ceiling of ivory plaster wrought into tournament or banquet-feast, or painted with rosy Cupids or large-limbed women with little of the goddess about them except the scantiness of their draperies, room after room, with tall cabinets and cushioned divans and buffets with their load of quaint drinking-vessels of horn and glass, graceful but scarcely valuable enough to tempt a covetous eye or hand. Cards and dice were scattered on one or two tables, half-hiding the marbles inlaid with dead birds or a heap of shells and jewels; a fan of scarlet feathers seemed thrown down by a dainty hand on a sofa just quitted; but the searchers noticed with surprise that while every one of the apartments, linked to each other by curtained arches, spoke of delectable shade from the Italian sunshine, not one of them offered accommodation for the night. The revels held in this summer-palace must, it would seem, set the summer-night at defiance, or be shattered, like feasts of faery, at the coming of the dark.

The search had ended in a blank. As though impatient of the green gloom cast by the shrubs on the rooms opening on the colonnade, the solitary inhabitants of the villa seated themselves on the steps above the water, their faces towards the west, whence in an hour or so the dying day would pass, like an Eastern king, in a great burning. Fiamma looked anxiously towards it. "Can we be trapped here to starve?" she said.

"No," returned the fen-man, "for madonna has watched me from her Venetian balconies swim and dive like a wild duck. If you have no fear of an hour or so alone in this sleeping palace, I can cross the lake and beg, borrow, or steal a boat from the fisher-folk of the sandhills yonder, and so we shall be quit of Bianca's hospitality before midnight."

Fiamma shuddered slightly. "What must be, must, but it will be dreary waiting in this House of the Nightshade." Then she stopped, clutching Talbot's hand. "*Miasma!* 'Tis the answer to the riddle!"

"Her soul to Hell!" The words came slowly through the man's shut teeth. He had grown white with the anger which sucks the blood from the heart to send it seething through the brain; his careless eyes had turned to a cold grey. When he was fighting for his life Mark Talbot had not lost his smile, but he looked dangerous now.

Fiamma's eyes were lifted anxiously to the west, where the blue seemed already deepening and fusing into the sunset flame. She turned to him and laughed, her head going up and back in its brave pretty defiance. "Bianca has baited her trap cunningly," she said. "This pavilion, built for hawking-parties to lounge away a hot noon in, must be a cave of death when the miasma from the marshes is set free like other ghosts at nightfall. Caged

here by the rising of the water, after all it would seem no great hardship to wait a summer night till some woodman, going to work in the forest, should see our signal for a boat. So that fair-faced Judas calculated on our thinking, knowing us to be strangers to the ways of these marshes."

She paused to look inquiringly at Talbot's actions. He had turned back into the *loggia* striding with stern set face through the deserted rooms, sending a swift glance over each. Room after room failed to yield what he sought, and with a muttered oath he came back again into the colonnade, sending his look now along its green lattice-work. Suddenly his face lit up with satisfaction. He had drawn his sword, slashing into an alder bush till the long slender branches were strewn about him on the marble at his feet.

At his first stroke Fiamma had copied him. Running into one of the rooms occupied by Bianca's suite, she had possessed herself of a keen three-edged blade, lying where it had been dropped from some belt; with it in her hand she threw herself on the bushes, cutting with the same headlong haste as her husband, though she could only guess at his purpose. Talbot had thrown himself on the pavement, beginning some odd weaving work before either spoke.

"This rush of fresh water should lessen the force of the miasma, but for all that we have no time to lose," he said. "There's nothing in all this accursed house to make a raft of, neither door nor planking; but in the fens I used to push my little sister on such a thing of osier-work as this to the islands where the white swan was on her nest or the reaches where the lilies were moored in their armadas. It looks frail enough, but for all that it's safe, sweetheart, and the rod that at home warmed us after a

sousing, has taught me skill in ferrying my passenger."

"I have no fear with you," said Fiamma; "but could I not hold to your shoulder while you swim?"

"I will not have you ride the night through in soaked garments," returned Talbot shortly. "And the night through must be ridden at our hardest, if we are to bring justice on Bianca Capelli."

The light had almost gone as Talbot knelt at last to launch his raft on the water. Fiamma was pale, but the anxiety in her look was for the sun sinking out of the sky as she crouched on the little woven platform, the interstices ingeniously filled up with bunches of wiry roots.

Out into the sunset on the water the tiny raft floated, steered and propelled by the swimmer behind it. The sword, placed for safekeeping across Fiamma's knees, glinted like the dangerous blue eyes that were set on their goal of the forest, in the balsamic depths of which the miasma could not penetrate. The sun sank, and the swimmer swam on.

The breath of the forest came across the water like a greeting as the fugitives neared it. Fiamma lifted up her head and smelt the scent of pine and moss with a rush of glad tears, but the sternness did not fade from Talbot's face, as, waist-deep in the water, he stood at last to carry his wife dry-shod through the thin ripples fretting up and down against the denying land. As he placed her gently on a bank of moss she clung for a moment, pointing through the trees to the sky, out of which the last gleam was fading. "But for you!" she whispered.

"No time for lip-service now, sweet chuck, either talk or kisses," returned her husband, drawing her on quickly. "If my memory serves, yonder is the camp on the edge of which our mules

were hobbled ; let us push for it, for the beasts must lather to-night."

The peasants camped in the little forest-clearing, busied through the daylight in drying in the sun their harvest of gathered pinecones, turned disappointed faces on the owners of the mules which no doubt had been allotted to themselves, but they answered readily to the enquiries of roads and bridle-paths. The aftermath of colour had not faded from the air before the riders were in motion riding at the steady set pace that means going.

The scent of the herbs crushed under the dogged hoofs rose to Fiamma's brain like some strange narcotic, making all things dreamlike to her. On and on and on their going cleft the night, till the forest fell back behind them and the mules splashed to their fetlocks in running water as they went down to the fords, and tall sunflowers stood like sentinels with shields of brass over patches of maize or flax. The day had leapt up again into the sky as they rode, but Fiamma could never clearly recall the stages of their journey, or the sun-steeped square and little brick arcades of Forli, where Talbot procured swifter beasts than those that had hitherto carried them.

One incident only remained clear to her. The sky was a-blaze again with stars, and the travellers were riding through a desert of rocks, splintered it would seem from the limestone crags around. The stones leaping from under the climbing hoofs were the only sound in the silence of the mountain, when suddenly a wild figure strode from behind a boulder, laying a sudden hand on Talbot's rein. "Why ride you so late, brother?"

"I ride on an enemy's heels," returned Talbot, the sternness of his

face showing even in the night. "And that I may not lose the race let me pass, brother."

Fiamma, bewildered in the starlight, looked at the strange apparition, a man in the prime of life, in tattered weather-beaten scarlet, from head to heel, his matted hair loose about his shoulders.

"Revenge!" he cried at Talbot's words. "It must be sweet to slake a hatred with revenge, rather than let it burn your heart. If revenge is left you, brother, the world's not empty for you."

"Time's walking while we're talking," retorted Talbot. "Let us pass. If the bells of Florence should fall a-chiming wedding-peals, before we are in the city, they will be the knells to our revenge."

The other grasped the bridle more firmly. "Yes, you must have your revenge!" he shouted. "And I can help you to it, for I know these mountains as a damned soul knows the bars of his gridiron. Come, there are paths trodden only by the wild goats and me that will give your enemy into your hands, no matter what start he has had."

He had turned the horses aside, setting them to clamber like the goats themselves, before Fiamma had realised the turn in their affairs. Talbot, close beside her, with an arm always ready to steady her in the saddle, pointed to the stars, at her whispered remonstrance. "The fellow is steering straight on Florence," he said. "Such a pass as this cuts off leagues of distance."

The horses strained and sweated in the darkness. The air about the riders grew colder, telling of snows stronger than the summer. The naked limestone was about them on all sides, and the streams, leaping from rock to rock, seemed escaping in haste from the desolation. Yet daylight, when it

came, was worse than the darkness. Fiamma trembled as she looked over her saddle down a sheer mountain-wall, the roots of which were below sight. Afraid of lifting a hand to shut out the danger, she rode with closed eyes, till startled by breathing at her ear. The mysterious guide had dropped back beside her, walking with a half-foot over the precipice that he might force her horse to keep the inside.

"No danger for me, wench," he answered her protest. "Know you not that an executioner has the lives of all the folk he has done to death?"

The grim avowal was broken by a sudden shout from Talbot. The horses had come to a breathless halt on the saddle of a cleft slashed in the side of a springing cone that overtopped the rockwall it crested. Far below, enamelled on the blue distance, a green valley lay in the sunshine, the silver links of a river glittering through its windings. Like knights marshalled for tournament on a green meadowland rose a cluster of towers, some massive with battlement and cornice, some ardent with springing grace, about the great jasper-tinted dome that gleamed through the blue distance, a very red lily such as Florence carries for her badge, lily and lily-stem, the longdrawn tawny mass of building and the bell-tower, slender as an actual spire of blossom beside it. The eager eyes on the mountain looked down upon them, but could not see the happenings in the city that lay so plainly there within its brown walls before them,—their goal.

Talbot set spurs to his horse, and held it up with a strong hand down the slithering pass. For a brace of minutes Fiamma followed in his tracks, mindful of nothing except their errand and their haste. Then the strange words she had heard

stirred again in her, making her sharp-set for the mystery that must lie hid in them, before they made her pitiful for the misery that was not hidden at all. Exile and expiation, so much was plain to her, and a woman's prayer went up for the pain of which she knew no more than that it needed healing, before she opened her eyes again upon the outside world. Gray-misted olive-groves and processions of black-stemmed cypresses were in her foreground; the man in whose company they had travelled through the night fell behind, looking back along the high road itself at a half-mile distance.

"By a whirlwind of dust the enemy you have outstripped is not far behind," he said suddenly. He pushed the money aside which Talbot offered. "Payment enough to have spoken to a human creature once more," he said setting his face to the mountains with a long swinging stride.

Fiamma dragged at her horse's rein, wheeling him suddenly. "From now and for ever you have a woman's prayers," she said with abrupt earnestness, then swung round at her husband's call, as the wild figure plunged on and from them. "We must ride it, girl, for all we know!"

The wind streamed against her face as the horses sprang forward; like a strong current setting in against their speed it flowed past them. The beasts, road-worn though they were, answered gamely to the push, the one bearing Fiamma taking the pace set by his stable-companion under Talbot's handling. The black cypress-trees went by at the gallop; peasants, with a history of blight in the oliveyards or cankerworms in the vines in every wrinkle of their brown faces, stood to stare at the race; the bells of the nearing city started into voice as though jeering the snail's-pace. Up

from the ground, down from the sky, beat the fierce summer heat, till Fiamma grew dizzy as she rode. A shudder of the beast under her loosened her in the saddle. His pace had fallen like an expiring flame, and as she became conscious of it, he tripped on to his knees, recovered, fell again, shaking her from him as he rolled sideways with a pitiful groan. Fiamma raised herself giddily, gazing about her at the vineyards on each side of the road stretching their green lines towards the groves through which glimpses of white walls showed here and there.

"Luck's against us! The nag's dead!"

Fiamma scarcely heard Talbot's words. The dizziness was increasing, and her limbs were trembling beyond her power of control. Her husband looked at her for a moment, then Fiamma felt herself snatched up and carried by him among the vines. "We've not come so far to be beaten at the finish," he said, panting a little under her weight. "You can go no further, but now that you're in Florence and a petticoat, you're in no danger save from Bianca herself. You may safely await me under these trees while I'll on to your Cardinal with his crucifix as token from you, and tell him that if he does not covet to make your sister-in-law his, now is his chance." He bent to unfasten the crucifix from Fiamma's neck as he laid her in the shadows, and kissed her pale face. "Sweetheart, I grudge leaving you, but all honest men pay their debts, and mine for her hospitality of the marshes has not been paid yet to madonna Bianca."

The tenderness that had softened the sea-blue eyes had vanished, before he for the second time brushed the morning's dew from the vines, and made his way back to the high road. With a look to stamp the bearings of

the place on his memory, he put his tired horse again to a trot, never drawing rein until he stood to shout for admission at the frescoed gateway of San Gallo that opened from Florence towards the north.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE busy town was already at its fullest, but the Englishman could not discern any special excitement afoot in the streets through which he rode his jaded horse as quickly as might be towards the Riccardi palace. No bells were clashing news of a prince's wedding over the land, and the commonplace of the streets was not being marshalled by a duke's guard to receive a fair bride riding out of the north for him. Talbot blessed the chance that had drifted him across the path of the exile of the mountain who had guided him so well, as he came in sudden sight of the arms of the Medici crowning the dark gateway of the Riccardi palace.

Entrance to a stronghold of the Medici was a work of more minutes than an entrance within the walls of Florence. Talbot chafed at the scrutiny of the porter, the insolence of the lackeys demanding his style and title, but answered all with the good-humoured assurance that never fails to carry weight: "A gentleman of England with tidings for my lord Cardinal." The simple announcement won him way beneath the towering gateway and over the double courtyard with the throng of pages and squires round the low-rimmed fountain. It was a passport up the broad staircase that led from the inner court to the upper floors; but with the first step into the antechambers, where half Florence seemed to need to see his Eminence, its power failed. Talbot was beckoned here and there

on inlaid floorings, was catechised by a half-score of underlings, was advised to wait for this or that one, encouraged that five minutes' patience was all which was needed, and bidden to come again to-morrow, till at last he spoke out with the laugh that usually hid his earnest. "If I were a pack of cards, friends, you could shuffle and deal me here and there no more than you've done. Let me collect my scattered five wits in this closet, and do you, one of you, try to earn this gold rook by bringing me in the length of it to His Eminence."

The covetous Italian eyes glittered at the jewel Talbot displayed as he spoke. That the bribe would prove a spur to his business he had little doubt; meanwhile he was left to himself in a small anteroom, overlooking a square of garden-ground with tall cypresses at the angles. Half absently he moved to the window, where a rose-bush had climbed one of the funeral-trees, spangling its close growth with blossoms. A shadow that was not the cypress's stretched from it on to the sunny path beyond, the shadow of some unseen person standing against the sombre green obelisk.

The shadow advanced slowly. Some of the rose-leaves dropped downwards, marking the ground where it had lain as if with a little trail of blood.

Mark Talbot, looking from the window, raised his eyebrows quickly. The shadow's owner had stepped into full sight, sweeping the rose leaves up with the hem of the red skirts that fell about him. He walked slowly, and the companion of his walk was Piccolo the dwarf.

The spectator in the closet above unlatched the casement, throwing it open with a tinkling sound. At the noise the Cardinal looked up. Talbot in the window above bent forward, his

outstretched hand holding Fiamma's crucifix.

Cardinal Ferdinando shaded his eyes with a well-shaped hand, and looked long, longer apparently than suited with Piccolo's impatience, for he plucked at the red skirts, speaking eagerly to the wearer, who dropped his hand, sauntering on with him in the sunny path. And Talbot leant back against the window-frame with a shrewd suspicion that the dwarf's audience boded little good to Bianca Capelli. He was content to wait for his own turn. Yet every moment that passed took with it something of his content, till he fell to striding up and down the closet, now thinking of Fiamma as he had left her under the trees, now of the purple-hung litter bringing a queen to Florence. "Damn the Cardinal!" he muttered.

"Have you come to see to the thing being done, friend?"

Talbot stopped short in his stride. A panel had slid back, revealing the scarlet figure of the Cardinal in the light bare chamber beyond carved with the story of Cupid and Psyche.

They were alone. So much Mark Talbot saw as in obedience to the Cardinal's gesture he stepped through the aperture and faced his Eminence's smile squarely. "If it interests your Eminence, madonna Bianca Capelli is somewhere not far from Florence at this moment," he said, and held out the crucifix.

Cardinal Medici surveyed it tranquilly. "A rough piece of workmanship enough, my son. Scarcely what a churchman with some poor reputation for taste would wish to present to a fair lady as a token of welcome on her coming."

"That's as may be, Eminence," returned Talbot bluntly. "Yet such a token, a blade hidden under the symbol of peace and good will, might come fitly enough from the hand from

which Cavaliere Padino received this same crucifix a while back."

"But the blade is broken, son," said the churchman softly, as he touched the spring in the crucifix.

Through Talbot's perplexed silence the roar of a cannon shattered the air without. The Cardinal stretched the hand holding the crucifix towards the window. "The cannon of the Pitti," he remarked. "Some guest, worthy of honour, must be at the palace-gates." He rose, regarding Talbot with a smile that scarcely hid the keenness of his scrutiny. "A gentleman owes it to himself to play the losing game gracefully," he said. "And you, who come from Cavaliere Padino, know doubtless how the board was set, nay, it would seem that you yourself have some small stake on the game. What is it? a place in my household, or a troop of such golden angels as are likely to belong to the service of this crucifix?"

"My stake was heavier, and I have lost it," replied Talbot. "To sweep, not a pawn that threatened her, but a woman she hated from the board, Bianca Capelli tried to murder the girl I love even then on her way to report to you how she had played the move appointed by you."

Cardinal Ferdinando shrugged his shoulders. "It seems my pawn in playing came to her woman's kingdom and was crowned," he said. "She has the less to complain of, though I counsel her to keep out of sight of the White Queen which has reached the King. As for you, my son, I would advise you to forgive even as I forgive, and that you may have grace granted you so to do, it will be well you should tarry for a space in the household of one vowed to the service of God and Holy Church."

The tinkle of a handbell, in the shape of a tiny tortoise with a golden head, was answered instantly by Cos-

mo with three or four footmen in the rear. Their master pointed coolly towards the Englishman. "Bestow this gentleman in an apartment, and treat him in all ways as a guest, but as he is an unwilling one, place a guard without," he commanded. "And you, Cosmo, order all things instantly to ride to the Palazzo Pitti, that I may bring my humble greeting to the sister and the sovereign whom to-morrow will bestow upon me."

Talbot sprang fiercely forward. "As an Englishman I appeal against this injustice! My wife is defenceless; she is even now waiting my return. Eminence, I resist,—for the sake of your office you cannot thus trap an innocent man who came hither trusting in you!"

"Your wife took care of herself before she was your wife, my son," the Cardinal returned smilingly. "If my people can find her, she shall be lodged with you; meanwhile the affair is not so serious as you picture it. Two or three days at most will doubtless convince you that you can afford to forgive your enemy."

The desperate rush Talbot meditated was balked by the guard closing in about him, while the opening folding-doors revealed a crowd waiting in the gallery beyond. He was trapped and he knew it, as he walked sullenly towards his prison, his one faint hope being the possibility that suggested itself of sending word to his servant at the inn to which, on the wedding-day that now seemed so long back, he had despatched him with his papers and few valuables, bidding him wait there for further orders. The fact of his having a higher opinion of Giles's loyalty than of his wits, was the drawback, and Talbot felt it insurmountable enough to wreck the plan he had for an instant entertained of sending him to Fiamma, doubtless waiting patiently for her

husband on the spot where they had parted in the wood.

But at the moment when Talbot's guard settled themselves to cards with shoulders set against the door behind which they had left their prisoner to his thoughts, Fiamma was no longer in the wood. Some minutes before, a couple of foresters had lighted upon a handsome young woman, in a peasant's dress of some fashion beyond the mountains, lying underneath a great sycamore, and her evident exhaustion appealed to the vicarious hospitality which is part of the domestic creed. Fiamma indeed was hardly conscious when the good-natured fellows supported her towards a pavilion among the trees hard-by, invoking on her behalf the kindness of a *padrona* whose fat neck wreathed with a gold chain bore witness to her prosperity in office.

In a chamber overlooking the sunny courtyard of various kitchen-offices Fiamma and the fever on her wrestled together through long days and nights. The splendid health had given way at last; there were hours when the kindly strangers who had harboured her whispered that there was no need to send her to the hospital of St. Matthew in the Piazza, since it would be only making a round to the dead-house. There were days when the fever burnt her, and nights when she wearied herself in struggles to rise and go to her husband, whose name never ceased from her lips except when she pleaded with Ben-Levi to release her from New Egypt, or shrieked that the miasma was rising round the House of the Nightshade. The hoarse rapid voice grew daily weaker, and the brave young life flickered low, while Talbot raged against his imprisonment, and Cardinal Medici himself more than once revolved the riddle of his agent's strange disappearance. And through

all these days and nights the bells clashed joyously in Florence and streets were gay with banners, in welcome to the bride at the Pitti, the lovely Capelli whom Duke Francesco had made his at last.

The clucking of fowls in the courtyard below shut out those distant peals on the afternoon when Fiamma awoke from her long fever-dream. She was alone, scanning passively in her weakness the unfamiliar room, and wondering idly at the farmyard noises unheard by her for so long.

A wooden gallery ran outside her window. She could hear feet moving on it, but the upper panes, to which her eyes wandered involuntarily, remained blank. Vaguely puzzled, her gaze fell lower,—to see a shaggy head, and two intent eyes fixed on hers, a human face, at the height of a three-years' old child.

With a faint shudder of disgust, the girl let her eyelids fall, sliding into sleep even in the effort of recalling when or where she had seen such an apparition before. The goblin-like creature without entered the room unheard by her, touching her hands and examining the cup of drink left by her mattress before he vanished and the crazy gallery ceased to report his footsteps. In the silence the bells sent a surge of triumph through the afternoon. Their clamour had driven Mark Talbot to his feet, sending him up and down his room in the fierce protest of the caged beast against captivity. The young man had grown haggard in these last days, and his blue eyes were not good to meet as he stared into the walled garden in which, on his unlucky coming, he had seen Cardinal Medici talking with Piccolo.

As though bred of the thought, the two appeared before him again. The Cardinal's head was bent over a tiny packet which the dwarf had just drawn from his breast, turning his grotesque

face in swift scrutiny as he did so. At sight of the prisoner in the window above, he pointed, and Cardinal Ferdinando looked up hastily. Before Talbot could decide whether to appeal or to threaten the couple had disappeared, and the cypress-trees were abandoned to the cajoleries of the roses.

"You are summoned to His Eminence." The welcome words had fallen at last on Talbot's ear, piercing through his abstraction as lightning pierces through clouds. Page Cosmo gave back a little at the impetuosity of the prisoner's movement, and seemed to breathe more freely when he left him on the threshold of the Cardinal's private chamber.

Messer Babuino the monkey was not well. The Cardinal, seated in his elbow chair, held this pet of his on his knees, looking gravely into his filmed eyes. He nodded slightly to Talbot on his entrance. "I have news for you, my son," he said. "Your wife is safe and sound; to-morrow you shall rejoice her."

"Why not to-night?"

Cardinal Ferdinando leant over the table, pouring some light wine into a cup. The monkey's yellow-hazel eyes followed the action. "Because to-night is not to-morrow, my son," he answered with a certain abstraction in his tone. "Look you, your nation has a skill in medicining sick beasts; think you this ape here has more than a passing sickness on him?"

"He has what every day will make worse,—old age, Eminence," Talbot replied curtly, glancing at the creature's grey muzzle and the worn fangs it was showing to the stranger.

The Cardinal's impassive face altered slightly at the words. "It is true," he murmured, stroking his favourite's head; "he is very old. He was my mother's pet at the villa-home before he came to me, when her blessed soul

went from us. And now he cannot eat, only drink," he added, drawing the cup to him.

"Where is my wife, Eminence? I implore you, let me go to her."

The Cardinal did not answer for a moment. The little packet which Talbot had seen him receive from Piccolo was in his hand; with the point of a quill he had separated a grain or two of the powder which it enclosed, shaking them into the straw-coloured wine before him. He held up the goblet to the light, smelling at it delicately.

"I am little used to pray to any but God, Eminence, but I pray now to you!" Talbot went on.

"Shall I do better than God, my son, and push Fate out of her road for prayers the most passionate?" retorted the Cardinal. "Perhaps, as the preachers tell us, you will find the denial of your request its surest fulfilment. To-morrow you will understand the ways of my Providence."

The cold little hand of the monkey came on his, in attempted possession of the cup. The Cardinal looked up at Talbot. "You are sure he has not long to live?"

"I wish you were as near your last hour as the brute is," responded Talbot harshly.

The Cardinal smiled slightly, touching the bell before him. "Serve your master to the last then, Babuino," he said. As the Englishman, driven by circumstance, departed with his guards, he glanced back to see the animal drinking greedily from the cup that His Eminence held for him.

The short strange interview had lashed Talbot's mood into storm. For the first time it occurred to him that it was possible the Cardinal had not given up the game so completely as he had seemed to do; an explanation of his arbitrary imprisonment dawned faintly on him, in the light of the

friendliness his gaoler had manifested in relieving his gnawing anxiety as to his wife's fate. If Cardinal Ferdinando were indeed slowly moving towards a subtly planned checkmate for the adversary who so long had maintained the board against him, it was conceivable that he would not let one who could tell so much as Talbot of what would put the Capelli on her guard, go abroad in Florence. The idea explained, too, the anxiety which he had displayed over Fiamma's disappearance; the agent sent by him to Venice could tell a dangerous story.

Such thoughts kept Talbot on his feet through the short summer night. The piping of the quails came up sharply from the olive slopes, seeming to whistle night down the sky, as the earth slowly stripped off its domino of hodden grey, showing itself in festal trim of blue and green and gold. With quick impatient steps Talbot walked his prison as he walked the night away, wheeling at the opening door as though the new day must have brought Fiamma to him. A curse broke from him as he saw only Cosmo.

"It's His Eminence's pleasure you should ride with us this morning to the banquet he gives Duke Cecco and his Venetian," said that youth pertly. "The barber is here, to clip that thatch of yours, and the sooner you put yourself inside the feast-clothes that my master has provided for you, the better for yourself."

"Your wit is better grown than your manners, youngster," returned Talbot, his pulses acknowledging the summons with a glad leap.

Cosmo lingered, perhaps to hinder any communication with the hair-dresser. "Hasten, or the Cardinal's humour will be blacker than it is already," he said, as the Englishman, his fair curls and moustache duly trimmed and scented, began to throw

himself into the garments which Cosmo had brought, the long tunic of rich purple and hose of a paler shade of the same colour setting him off to advantage besides fulfilling the Cardinal's possible ulterior motive of obviating attention to an English cut of garments in one of his train. "Madonna! the brute Babuino died not five minutes after you left his presence last night, and one would think it had been the Holy Father! The live-long night has my master had that misshapen mannikin closeted with him, in order that the ape may be stuffed, not as he was in life with sweetmeats enough to turn any Christian's stomach at seeing, but with drugs over which, by the evidence of the keyhole, His Eminence himself condescended to soil his hands at the crucible."

"You'll never be at a loss for a rope to hang yourself in, as long as your tongue's left you," remarked Talbot, catching up the cap with the Medici crest on it. With a glad step he crossed the threshold forbidden to him for so many weary days, and as under the page's guardianship he descended to the great courtyard, Cardinal Medici appeared on the central staircase. With a wave of his hand he invited the Englishman into the huge gilded coach, harnessed to the eight grey horses, that awaited him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was evident that the Cardinal would do honour to his brother's bride. Not an outsider, not a wedding-favour, — the colours of the Medici and Capelli interwoven — had been omitted from the procession, while the Cardinal himself was in fullest festal array, lace and jewels relieving the scarlet of his robes.

The banners were still abroad in

the streets through which the magnificent train took its way. The pale blue Tuscan sky was shamed by the blue awnings overhead, gay with embroidered inscriptions which seemed to make the very streets vocal with welcome to their Grand Duke and his Duchess Bianca. Ropes of flowers, faded but still fragrant, crossed and recrossed each other twelve feet from the ground in the open spaces of the square, as the coach lumbered into the great Piazza of the Duomo and the wheels went heavily on the drifts of rose-leaves, yellow and white, pink and crimson, that had carpeted the great space for the bridal. Here and there, in a narrow street, a stray white dove beat up and down under the blue roofing, a belated straggler from the flock that had been loosed to flutter over the chariot in which the fair Capelli had been drawn to her triumph. The air round the Pitti was still faintly sweet with the perfumes that the fountains had played in the festivities; a woman, leaning on a balcony still hung with gay draperies, hummed a fragment of one of the odes of welcome which the choirs of the churches had chanted in the wedding-procession, as she looked down on the Cardinal's coach.

"The Venetian has had no fault to find in her greeting from the people of Florence," said Cardinal Ferdinando. It was the first time he had spoken since he had entered the coach, but, in spite of the page's declaration, his humour seemed of the best. The pallor that had, at first, spoken silently of the vigil spent over the crucible, had given place to a faint colour; his eyes, inscrutable as ever, lost nothing of what the streets had to show as he rested comfortably on his scented cushions, glancing negligently from side to side.

The coach was passing by a wall draped with golden lichens when Cosmo,

who throughout had ridden a slender Arabian close by the carriage door, fell out of line with a vexed ejaculation. A second later he appeared on foot. "Griselda, Eminence, has gone lame. A sugarplum from some of the showers of *confetti* has lodged in her foot, and the frog is bruised."

The Cardinal straightened himself slightly on his cushions. Out of the distance a sound of silver trumpets had drifted, and as he raised his hand for silence it came again, shrill and sweet and fuller. He nodded. "The bride makes gracious haste to our festivity," he remarked, himself opening the coach door. "You, master Talbot, do me the favour of bringing Cosmo's beast to the stables to which the porter at yonder gate will direct you; you will be serving yourself at the same time."

The hint was sufficient to bring Talbot to his feet in a bound. Grasping the mare's bridle he led her towards tall iron gates which he saw a few paces ahead.

"Wilt not wait to see the Duchess pass, friend?" expostulated the porter as he gave him admission. "Well, no doubt you've sucked wisdom in with your mother's milk; better at your years not to see so pretty a bit of red and white, when nothing but the seeing can come of it. And the Grand Duchess of Florence is not likely to be so friendly even to handsome faces like yours, as was madonna Bianca in these very groves of the Oricellari."

The name of the groves he was entering struck Mark Talbot with surprise, wondering if, as from the Cardinal's hint had seemed likely, some strange chance had drifted Fiamma into the scene of her brother's murder. Scarcely pausing for the porter's directions, he hastened on over the springy turf, till a thud of hoofs behind warned him that the riding-party had availed

themselves of a short cut to the pavilion he saw white through the trees in front.

Binding the mare's nostrils with his handkerchief lest her whinny should betray him, he stepped behind a thick hedge along the other side of which the riders were already advancing. As he stood, he could see the whole brilliant cavalcade, led by the pages with the silver trumpets which the Grand Duchess had ordained should form part of her daily escort. The plainness of the ladies-in-waiting drew a scornful smile from the Englishman's lips as, marshalled by handsome and supercilious young Florentines, they passed the unseen spectator; but a sudden light sweet laughter banished the smile, as Talbot's eyes fell upon the woman whom he had last seen when she had ridden forth from the House of the Nightshade, leaving him and his wife to the death her treachery had planned.

The Capelli looked her part of Grand Duchess well. Seated on a white palfrey, the curves of her rounded figure showed as though moulded into the habit of white satin sprinkled with the red Florence lily, and cut low on the neck to display the collar of great rubies on the white column of the throat. The fair curls were gathered to-day into a golden net studded with diamonds, and the face, thus deprived of any softening shadow, might have been the masque of some beautiful Lamia, so hard were the brilliant eyes and so cruel the immobility of the red mouth. A mantle, with the ermine of her new dignity, flowed backwards from her shoulders, touching on one side Duke Francesco, swarthy and gloomy-eyed as ever, in his bridegroom's trim of gold and white, on the other Cardinal Ferdinando, walking at Bianca's bridlehand like a captive at his conqueror's rein. Behind them, the

gay train poured on into the green ride.

In front a sudden jar had come to the procession. The trumpets had broken off in the midst of a *fanfare*, maids of honour and attendant courtiers had scattered amid exclamations to right and left, leaving a green path clear to the bride. Talbot caught his breath in astonishment as down that green path stepped Piccolo the dwarf.

The uncouth creature was dressed in a herald's tabard, but of a blazon strange to any herald there; a black tabard, blazoned horribly with skulls and crossbones, and in his hand he carried a pipe fashioned out of the bone of a human leg.

"Bianca, Grand Duchess of Florence, dead Cassandra the sorceress summons you to meet her in hell within the hour!" he cried, after a thin blast on his ghastly instrument. "By your harlotry with Francesco of Medici she summons you! By your murder of Pietro Bonaventuri she summons you! By the soul you have lost she summons you!"

Talbot, behind his leafy screen, rubbed his eyes. With his last words Piccolo had vanished, sinking into the earth in the instant that the Grand Duke, his eyes flaming in his ashen face, rushed with drawn sword upon him. Shrieking like a madwoman Bianca cast herself from her saddle bodily upon her husband, flinging the ermined mantle over both their heads, cowering under its shelter. Cardinal Ferdinando moved swiftly forward, planting the oriflamme of his scarlet precisely over the spot where the dwarf had disappeared.

"Some pleasantry of my ducal brother, whose brain runs willingly on such gruesome conceits," he whispered to those nearest his scornful tolerant smile. "'Tis but fair repayment for the fright madonna Bianca

meted out to him when they last met in these groves, and the tumbling of him quick into Purgatory. On with you in Heaven's name! the Grand Duchess will recover herself the sooner for this dismal choir of screams being hushed, and meats and drinks will be sweeter in all our mouths than groans and cries."

Talbot did not wait to see the effect of His Eminence's cheerful scepticism. Regardless of the bruised hoof, he had swung himself on Griselda's back, urging her with heel and hand over the mossy turf in advance of the company still halted in confusion on the opposite side of the tall yew hedge. A prescience of evil was strong upon him, and he rode to snatch his wife from some unknown danger.

Skirting the further end of the plantation he rode, guided by cheery farmyard noises, into the stable courtyard. There were no servants about, and the sunshine and the pigeons had the space to themselves; the latter towering up under his horse's feet, carried the rider's eyes involuntarily after them till the look rested where the birds had done,—on the gallery in which, white and smiling, stood Fiamma's self.

Her cry of warning against the crazy woodwork had scarcely been uttered before Talbot was at her side. Kisses, broken words, tender touches, and then a coherent question came from the Englishman. "Do you know whose is the roof that has sheltered you?"

The girl shook her head. "To-day and yesterday, when my fever left me, I have seen none save the old crone who brings me food, and she is deaf as a blue-eyed cat. In another day I should have had strength enough to make my way to the Riccardi, and demand news of you from the Cardinal himself."

"Ah, if you wish for a farewell benediction, now's your chance! The Cardinal is under the same roof with you at this moment; the Orti Oricellari witnesses to-day his reconciliation with the Capelli!"

"The Orti Oricellari! Blood of Christ! it cannot be that this is *her* house, that I have eaten *her* bread in these days!"

"The miracle is that you *have* eaten it, and live. Quick, we must make the best of our way to Florence, before our pretty Duchess finds out that her sister-in-law after all has accepted her hospitality, and has no stomach to pay the bill! Quick, for my mind misgives me that a storm is brewing; that Cardinal of yours strikes me as one whose forgiveness is likely to wipe off all scores once for all."

He drew Fiamma to the edge of the balcony, but recoiled instantly, as voices and footsteps announced the approach of various grooms and horseboys approaching. "We must not be seen here," he said. "Come, let's try if a way out cannot be found through the lofts beyond."

Almost carried by him, Fiamma yielded to his guidance, passing over floors thickly laid with ears of maize drying in the sunshine and pumpkin-seeds gathered into heaps. A rough flight of wooden stairs led them into a lower story, but affording no hint of exit from its shaded rooms.

Fiamma stopped abruptly, as a laugh reached her ears, every fibre of her shaking in a vibration of hatred at the thin silvery tone. Talbot had heard it too. In a stride he had reached an oriel, clinging like a swallow's nest to the wall and looking down at right angles on a small luxurious *loggia* some thirty feet below, belonging to the main building of the pavilion. The occupants of the *loggia* were four, Page Cosmo,

scared but observant behind Cardinal Medici's chair, placed on the left hand of Duchess Bianca and her bridegroom the Grand Duke.

The ghostly herald of the gardens had evidently wrecked the preconcerted order of the feast, the bride's hysterical terror making imperative excuse for her withdrawal into privacy with the husband and his brother. That ecclesiastical brother, indeed, seemed her reliance as, pale and wild-eyed, she crouched rather than sat under the ducal canopy, one white hand clinging to the scarlet sleeve at her left as to a scapular. The cool mocking voice was obviously reassuring to her superstitious agony; as it whispered to her, her forced laughter answered with slavish readiness.

A half of the predicted hour had gone by.

The couple looking down on the silent group noticed that one precaution at least was practised by the Venetian. She ate nothing, even the snow-topped sherbet before her remaining untouched. The Cardinal seemed to understand her abstinence, waving aside the page's proffers of delicate cates, but Duke Francesco made up for both; he ate voraciously, holding out at last the purple chalice affected by him for drink. As he did so, the Cardinal turned in his seat, taking a bowl of peculiar shape from Cosmo's hands. The square-tipped fingers, hidden in the shadow of the scarlet sleeve, hovered over the goblet's edge. Talbot, looking down, could not be sure that he had seen such a powder, as yesterday had been mingled by those fingers in Messer Babuino's wine, shaken stealthily out into the cup.

"Brother," said the Cardinal, "you, as well as I have heard with sorrow and shame the vile slander infecting your city of Florence,—that this sweet daughter of St. Mark was not widow

when she became your wife. To public disproof of such a tale, as well as for the easing of your private mind, I hold in these hands the skull of Messer Pietro Bonaventuri which I have had wrought into a drinking-cup, and I pray your acceptance of this trifling token of a brother's regard for the honour of the House of Medici."

The dark Duke flung out a hand, almost snatching the ghastly white bowl in its gold setting. Lifting it to his mouth he drank fiercely, thrusting it as he finished, against his wife's lips.

"Drink, thou!" he commanded.

The woman shrank back silently, turning her blue eyes on the Cardinal in agonised appeal. The churchman touched the hand that clung to him with cool light fingers. "Madonna is not minded to pledge you, Cecco," he intervened. "What, man, a woman does not lose her memory though she marries again! 'Tis not reason to expect her to press her dainty lips to a husband's skull, as though, curled and comely, it had never lain on her bosom!"

"She shall drink!" muttered the Duke savagely. "She has always had a hankering for the fellow; if she has not, she shall prove it by drinking now. Drink, wench, I say!"

With both white hands locked round the hairy wrist, Bianca was pushing the cup aside, her eyes fixed in a stare on the smouldering fire in Francesco's. For a moment or so the Cardinal looked on idly at her resistance, then, with the gesture of one who wearies of a spectacle, he drew out a jewelled timepiece, holding it in his hand as the silent struggle went on.

The Grand Duke started up suddenly in his place. His dark face had become convulsed, and unmistakeable madness glowed in the blackness of his eyes. He grasped his wife's neck

above the rubies, clutching it till the pale mouth opened in a gasp at the rim of the cup held to it.

With a smile Cardinal Ferdinando raised his eyes from his watch. "The hour is over, madonna, drink and fear nothing," he said.

A light of incredible relief shot over Bianca's face, as taking the cup in both hands she drank what was left of the wine in it. "It has been an hour of Purgatory!" she cried, letting the empty skull fall and roll on the marble mosaics of the floor. As it fell, the Cardinal rose, leaning against one of the pillars of the *loggia*. In his attitude was a silent suggestion of some passionless Fate, who looks on with weary indifference at the fulfilment of a tragedy which it has planned. From the falling of the cup, his part seemed to have changed from actor to spectator.

Fiamma in the oriel above clung with a quick gasp to her husband's shoulder. The Duke was by stealthy inches sliding back his gilded chair, the hand that hung slack at his side holding a knife filched from the table, his hungry eyes fixed on the woman beside him. "Let us get out of this house of blood!" the girl whispered. Shuddering with prevision of evil, the couple rushed from the oriel, flying through the empty rooms in search of an outlet from the pavilion that seemed to them an anteroom of hell.

A door flung in the lock behind them, slammed jarringly through the quiet house. The noise seemed to rouse Bianca from the torpor into which she had fallen. "I come, Pietro, I come!" she cried, a long trill of laughter through her words. Again and again she laughed, peal on peal of jangled sweetness, as with catlike swiftness she pounced on the skull lying where she had cast it. Tossing it from palm to palm, she made an unseeing step forward, thus

baulking the Grand Duke's sudden stealthy spring.

"Cassandra's vengeance!"

A hoarse beast-like yell mingled with the awful merriment rippling down the walls, as Piccolo shot across the Capelli's path, bringing her to her knees in his wild spring. She did not struggle against the clutch. On her knees, with a long shriek of terrible silver laughter, she flung her white arms above her head. "Pietro, the door is shut!" she cried, and thereafter lay very still.

The name on her lips seemed to lash the Grand Duke into frenzy. Growling, slaving, like a beast over its prey, he had leapt on her, stabbing the dead white bosom with savage strokes.

"Help! the Duke is ill!" The Cardinal broke his long silence with the call. At the sound the madman on the floor rose suddenly; while one could count ten he stood upright, looking from his brother to the woman with wide eyes and open mouth at his feet. Then he too fell heavily, across his dead Duchess, and the world went out for him.

"A madness came upon the Duke, and the Grand Duchess is slain by his hand."

The Cardinal muttered it as though in rehearsal for the revellers now rushing together at Cosmo's repeated cries. But he still maintained his negligent attitude, looking with wholly steady eyes at dead Bianca lying in her blood, which welled out over her dead bridegroom's satin, over the dead dwarf in whose body one of those mad strokes had been sheathed as he lay grasping his enemy, lest, at the last, she should slip through Death's fingers.

The Medici pinched his lips together with a slight expression of disgust "Why could not Cecco have left well alone?" he murmured. "Babuino

by the sacrifice of the hours remaining to him, had shown me how to make things sure. Blood is always in execrable taste."

The coming night brought an awakening wind through the gardens. The Cardinal moved to greet it, his eyes turned from the blood-stained marbles to the green park without, across which two figures had just struck into view. His Eminence looked as though the sight of living

figures in a living world brought some refreshment with it. A tolerant smile came to his lips as he recognised the tall figure of the Englishman supporting the drooping form of the girl at his side, their faces turned to the west where the brightening gold showed as an augury of good days to come. The smile deepened, and it was not an unkindly one.

"The board is swept!" he muttered.

THE END

THE ART OF LITERARY CONTROVERSY.

"CONTROVERSY," says the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table, "equalises fools and wise men, and the fools know it." To anyone thinking over some of the more noted literary controversies,—those for example concerning the identity of Shakespeare, the quantity of Homers, or the obscurity of Browning, which occur as regularly as the dog-days and seem to be infinitely more heating—the above quotation gains in fitness and truth. It is not indeed entirely true; on the subject of Bacon, to take an instance, I do not myself find an exactly even distribution of wisdom between Mrs. Gallup and Mr. Lang. And that is not merely because I am prejudiced in favour of Mr. Lang's view; because I prefer to think of an individual called Shakespeare as distinct from another individual called Bacon, just as in a cool hour I like to regard Homer as one rather than many—and by all means a man rather than a woman, and am willing to share with Browning at least a part of the shame of not being able to elucidate *SORDELLO* with my feet on the fender as, according to Macaulay, scholars read Plato; rather it is because I find Mr. Lang's articles more grammatical, more logical, more amusing than Mrs. Gallup's. The antagonists do not seem to me to write, so far as writing is concerned, on the same level. It may be that neither of them has any real advantage, inasmuch as neither of them can by any means agree to think that any gibe, logical conviction, or historical evidence (internal or external) could in any way change their inalienable rights to

consider Shakespeare the man they take him to be; but the advantage of arriving at the truth is not really a great consideration.

Even in those cases where there is a possibility of it, the controversial mode reduces the affair to a battle of words. For in the art of duelling, literary or otherwise, there are so many laws and preliminary courtesies,—the measuring of weapons, the grand salute, the conventional attitude—which must all be observed, that, before they are done with, an American has won the Derby and the issue is of no importance. By too much finessing in fact, the wise men and the fools are reduced to an equality.

Perhaps the wise men know it, however, as well as the fools. I am induced indeed to believe that literary controversialists for the most part have regarded their essays as a kind of gymnastic, and have waged their feuds with a view to strengthening them against the day of their solitary wrestling with untruth. At present that would certainly seem to be the attitude. Why otherwise should our controversialists be so entirely concerned with the outside of the cups and platters? Questions of the use and abuse of the split infinitive, of the rightness or wrongness of placing the epexegetic apostrophe over the contractions *cant* and *wont*; of the best method of misquoting some verse which has no interest whatever apart from its misquotability; of the comparative preponderance of old English or New American in the application of such words as *ker-blinkety* or *hog's-wash*,—questions like these one might

have supposed to be drier than dust to the ordinary man. Yet on behalf of a split infinitive the most peaceful citizens will dash into the lists, supported on the one side by Shakespeare and Miss Marie Corelli, on the other by Mr. Guy Boothby and Milton; leading minor poets will be induced to join the fray, and be paid for doing it; there will be furies and panics, trumpetings and dust. In the end, no doubt, the excitement will die down; the order to retire from battle will be given; and an editor will award laurels in a leading article full of literary fervour and redolent of Fleet Street. No doubt, also, Grammar requires her knight-errants at times, and the Muse in whose charge the English language lies is grateful to them. But why are the knights so many? And what is the so great attraction of their subject at the present time that they secure a better audience than did Mr. Gladstone and Professor Huxley at loggerheads over the miraculous behaviour of the Gadarean swine?

For one reason, I suppose, we are become more practical. Practical is the word, I am told, whatever it may mean. We have discovered in this instance that the Free-thinkers of the middle Victorian era were so much more free with their lips than with their meditations, and with their pens than with their thoughts, that we are disposed to fight shy of abstract discussion. Only philosophers can dispute for any length of time about the Thing-in-itself, and they require more space than is usually at their disposal in the columns of a newspaper. We cannot blame the Press in this matter. It is impossible for even an evening paper to pretend that there is news about the Thing-in-itself, or that everybody requires it, or that it is a bargain. It would leave a poster desolate; and it lacks the element

which is even more important than novelty or cheapness,—the element of familiarity, which makes the serpent a perennial boon. Whereas, —to return to the more popular subjects of controversy—our fellow-citizens know a split infinitive when it is pointed out to them; they have very likely misquoted the line in question themselves, at a literary society; they are anxious to learn if they can omit apostrophes (thus saving time) without falling away from respectability; and it is easy to rouse a spirit of patriotism over the derivation of *ker-blinkety*.

I have often thought that we plunge into controversy with a view to helping the editors of the newspapers we subscribe to and in the hope of making those newspapers more interesting. We know that editors have a very difficult task in securing bright matter, and the country is frequently in danger of dropping either its empire or its h's. A word in time produces nine, and it is no ignoble feeling that prompts us to rouse a nation under the anonymous title of "Pater Patrie," "Happy on Soda-water" or "a Mother of Ten." Nevertheless, though there is a classic instance to the contrary, I am not persuaded that anonymity belongs to the highest walks of controversy. We like to know who it is that is sparring, and how he takes the counter; nor can we tolerate anything that savours, like the anonymous letter, of hitting below the belt. The instance to the contrary was supplied by the LETTERS of Junius, and a large part of their interest, even at the time, lay in the fact that everybody thought he knew who had written them, and was in a position to contradict everybody else who thought differently. But when "Verbum Sap" (in a letter as long as the editor will permit) engages

"Nestor" in a light discussion as to the correct fall of the accent in acatalectic tetrameters, the public remains cooler than even the somewhat academic nature of the subject warrants. "Nestor's" satire loses its edge, "Verbum Sap's" indignation falls flat, if either is but a shadow unidentifiable. But let "Nestor" name himself, and give his address (though it be but Upper Tooting); let "Verbum Sap" do likewise, and the applause follows in due course. The nature of the tetrameter may not be determined, but that is no great matter. Not truth, but controversy is the thing.

The controversialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries understood this. It did not vastly concern Dean Swift whether Bentley and Wotton were justified or not in declaring the *EPISTLES OF PHALARIS* to be both valueless and apocryphal; nor was it that larger question as to the comparative merits of ancient and modern writers, which inspired him to write *THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS*. It was enough that his patron, Sir William Temple, was all for the ancients, and that in the dispute that arose "the town highly resented to see a person of Sir William Temple's character and merits roughly used by the two gentlemen aforesaid." These naturally followed his participation in that quarrel in which "whole rivulets of ink have been exhausted and the virulence of both parties violently and enormously augmented," and the writing of that manuscript, from which, as the booksellers' preface relates, "by the injury of fortune or weather, being in several places imperfect, we cannot learn to which side the victory fell." Victory was the last thing Swift desired. He had too great a scorn for those trophies (written in that "malignant liquor" compounded of gall and

copperas) which relate "a full impartial account of such a battle" and how the victory fell clearly to the party that set them up and are "called books of controversy."

To us it seems strange now that a matter so vast and so vague as the relative merits of ancient and modern writers should have been debated for years from country to country. As though any outcome could be expected! But it permitted of an unlimited supply of loose thought to be bandied about in the strict and polished language of the day; and since in addition no one could by the nature of the argument keep to any one point, it served admirably for controversy. So did Pope's *ESSAY ON MAN*, which was intended to set forth in heroic couplets the science of human nature. How loose the thought that went to make a controversy could be is clear from Pope's revised version of his famous leading lines. "Let us," they run in the accepted edition,

Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of
man;

A mighty maze! but not without a
plan.

But the first version omitted the *not* in the fourth line; and from "a mighty maze of walks without a plan" Pope felt just as capable, it seems, of constructing his, or rather Bolingbroke's, philosophy. And great was his indignation when M. Crousaz condemned the poem as leading to infidelity.

Writers were all controversialists then, partly because it was an age that loved debate—"I think I have not been attacked enough for it," said Dr. Johnson of one of his pamphlets. "I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds")—partly

because so many writers were in the pay of political factions, and literature was criticised from the political point of view, while politics degenerated often into a literary controversy. No little interest would attach to a study of how far literature was affected by politics and *vice versa* at that period. The triumph of literary men in the political sphere was gained at the end of the eighteenth century by the French Encyclopædists and by Rousseau; and Shelley in his preface to *ADONIS* would make us believe that the politicians of *THE QUARTERLY REVIEW* had their little triumph in breaking Keats's heart, though Keats himself denied it. Certainly the influence of the pen seems to have stirred angrier feuds and more bitter antagonists than even in the early days of the City-State, when a poet or a philosopher was thought capable alone and unaided of corrupting a nation, when Aristophanes threw all his satirical powers into the task of ridiculing Euripides for the perilous abuse of sibilants, and Socrates for his arguments was made to drink hemlock. The poets and wits of the Georgian period indulged the same fury without receiving the same provocation; the same denunciations without possessing the same morality, the same abuse of persons (not without humour it must be admitted, and brimming often with wit), but usually without conviction and always without excuse. *Quidquid agunt homines*,—whether it was the unconstitutional behaviour of kings or the illiterate versifying of one of the Grub Street race, a controversy could be made of it, to keep the town amused for a week. For "if a known scoundrel or blockhead but chance to be touched upon," Pope wrote "a whole legion is up in arms, and it becomes the common cause of all scribblers, book-sellers, and printers whatsoever." It

needed not so important a subject as the relative merits of ancient and modern authors; the demerits of a third-rate poetaster like Theobald were enough,—enough at least to make *THE DUNCIAD*.

Burke set controversy on a higher level; and perhaps it is to the credit of our modern controversialists that they seldom forget to be polite. The exceptions to this rule have not proved of the happiest nature. The late Mr. Buchanan's anonymous attack on the *Fleshy School* of poetry, as he called it, brought more odium upon himself, when he was discovered to be Anon, than upon the objects of his condemnation; nor has Mr. Swinburne increased in universal favour by eulogising Dickens at the expense of Mr. Andrew Lang, in language that might be the Billingsgate of Parnassus. Controversy moreover is rendered difficult when to agree with your adversary is impertinent, while to disagree is contemptible. But Mr. Swinburne was ever prone, like his master Catullus, to "make mouths at our speech."

A better exponent, perhaps the best, of the controversial art was Heine. "I know not if I deserve that a laurel wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a sword; for I was a brave soldier in the liberation-war of humanity." Matthew Arnold demurred to this estimate, vowed that Heine was very little of a hero, and declared that posterity would certainly decorate his tomb with the emblem of the laurel rather than with the emblem of the sword. He meant, I take it, that Heine's claim to have been a fighter

rather than a poet was an appeal to the nearer posterity rather than to that larger and remoter posterity that alone can give an ultimate verdict; that controversy depreciates in value with the years, takes its part and becomes forgotten, is, in the language of the philosophers, particular in its service rather than universal. But that is to ignore the form of the fighter, to deny in effect that there is an art of controversy. Not what Heine contended for, true though it may have been and of pre-eminent importance in his generation, but the methods of his contentions — the baffling wit, the heedless verities, the truths of the aside, the paradox, the parenthesis, the gay insults and the retorts courteous or uncourteous, scattered freely to lie or to be blown away, possess in themselves the touch of universality, and will make the REISE-BILDER, for example, remembered, it may be, as long as the songs. For, and it is worth repeating, the end of the controversialist is not to gain his point, but to have fought well. We do not go to THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS to arrive at a right understanding of the relative merits of ancient and modern authors, but to enjoy the wit of it and the keen handling of figures that have been given the breath of life that they might be transfixed with satire.

She therefore gathered up her person into an octavo compass: her body grew white and arid and split in pieces with dryness; the thick turned into paste-board and the thin into paper; upon which her parents and children artfully strewed a black juice, or decoration of gall and soot, in form of letters: her head and voice and spleen kept their primitive form; and that which before was a cover of skin did still continue so. In this guise she marched on towards the Moderns, indistinguishable in shape and dress from the divine Bentley.

That is how Swift contributes to

the controversy of the relative merits, and Heine's comment on Saalfeld, the anti-Napoleon pedant "still a Professor at Göttingen," was not less irrelevant and delightful.

Irrelevancy and wit, the power to transfix an opponent combined with an apparent disregard of his point, were faculties common to these two great controversialists, though some critics would have us believe that the Golden Age of the controversial art was a time rather when very solemn men (Masters of Arts and Philosophers) discussed very solemn themes with bated breath and pens not the less ponderous because handled with a sense of enormous responsibility. They would have us believe that from irrelevancy and wit have sprung our modern controversies, — a degenerate result. But at what period was there any Golden Age? Conscious of responsibility no doubt were the medieval philosophers, who were for ever waging controversies over words, which, as Hobbes said, are wise men's counters. Wit they were mostly devoid of, but irrelevancy was their distinguishing feature. Never by any chance did the Nominalists come to an understanding with the Realists, the Realists with the Nominalists. The illimitable literature of religious controversy is even less pointed, for it was ever the use of the zealot to move in a circle. Each behind his own line of demarcation, like French journalists fighting a duel, the devotees could practise their favourite thrusts and parries, double and circle, *riposte* and *remise*, splendidly wounding the air, but never one another except by accident, antagonists so short-sighted that they never could see each other's blade or breast.

I do not think that the twentieth century is less disposed to relevancy, though it may be more frivolous. There have been times of greater

earnestness; as when the middle Victorians flocked to the Great Exhibition, full of serious thoughts, or as when the Puritans refrained one another from theatre-going with a commendable social sincerity; but earnestness in argument, as I have tried to show, is no guarantee of relevancy. The more earnest the motive of the controversialist, the less conspicuous the point,—of his adversary: Don Quixote, bent on destroying villains, finds himself at strife with windmills wildly flapping.

Whether it is profitable to have for a controversial subject something large and many-sided is a question to which answers vary. It would seem as though towards the end of the nineteenth century the inclination was to controvert the relative merits of authors in an original form; as, for instance, the relative merits of Dickens and Thackeray, of Tolstoi and Turgenev, of Ibsen and Mr. Clement Scott. In another battle of books, a few years since, Sir Walter Besant bestrode the tolerably lively corpse of Mr. Kipling, defending it against all comers, and, particularly, if I remember right, against Mr. George Moore.

The drawback of many of these encounters was that the safety of the principle at issue was usually lost in defending the person supposed to embody that principle. Romantics would extol a second-rate Romanticist at the expense of Romance; Realists would hope to raise the cause of Realism by advertising the circulation of a third-rate Realistic writer. I can only recall a single and friendly controversy in which the opponents made clear their issue, that, namely, conducted in *THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW* between Robert Louis Stevenson and Mr. Henry James, and there

again the issue (which amounted to "What is the end of art?") was so vast that those two delightful writers came forth from it equally scatheless and equally unsuccessful, having hardly crossed swords.

On the whole then the subject of controversy seems of little importance; any apple is enough to make literary discords, "known," as Swift has it, "to the world under several names, as disputes, arguments, rejoinders, brief considerations, answers, replies, remarks, reflections, objections, confutations." It may be a pronouncement of such trifling importance as that W. H. of the Shakespearean sonnets is the Earl of So-and-so (a matter of as little interest surely as any that could be raised); or it may be so portentous a statement as that which Wordsworth (in his sonnet on the Sonnet) made:

With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart—

to be thus contradicted by Browning,—

Did Shakespeare so? Then the less
Shakespeare he—

a statement and a contradiction that between them lead to the profoundest question that can be asked concerning literary genius,—is it objective or subjective in its highest form? Either statement is good enough to make a controversy; but the controversy concerning the smaller subject may be better as such than the controversy concerning the larger, as anyone may read for himself. And the reason for it,—if I may repeat myself for the last time—is clear: the end of controversy is not to convince, but to persuade; to speak skilfully rather than to speak the truth.

R. E. VERNÈDE.

A CAPE PARSONAGE.

It was a large, rambling old house, built in the early years of the last century, in the style of an Indian compound house, with a broad high verandah (stoep) in front and a large enclosed yard at the back. Far away from civilisation it stood, for the little village of N——, where my father ministered as a Dutch Reformed clergyman (predikant), was situated in one of the back-veld districts, some three hundred miles from Cape Town and almost half that distance from the nearest railway station. One of the oldest houses in the town, it was one, too, that needed the most constant repair and attention, for the plaster was continually falling from the walls and the thatch roof was daily in danger of being disordered by the hot east winds that blew from the Karroo. Yet with all its faults, and they were many, the congregation of N—— regarded the house as a most palatial and comfortable mansion, and wondered what the parson had to complain of.

From the stoep one looked down on an old garden, much waste land, and an arid strip of boulder-strewn veld that extended far down to the little river which was usually dry in summer and a raging torrent in the winter months. In the garden stood a tall date palm that never fruited, a clump of graceful bamboos round whose stems the grenadillas had wreathed themselves into a hopeless tangle, and a row of old orange trees that bore a plentiful crop in early winter. The broad garden path was overgrown with burweed, the irritating *kweek* that is the worst annoy-

ance of gardeners in the south-western province of the Cape Colony, and the little hedge of rose and Australian myrtle trees that bordered it no longer retained any symmetry. In the half sandy, half loamy plots that had been made under the guava trees in close proximity to the orange orchard, were planted in summer mealies and water-melons, cucumbers and others of the gourd family, together with beans, broccoli and broad-leaved sweet potatoes; but in winter sweet potatoes stood there alone, blighted by the frost that had turned their smooth green to inky black and withered and killed their leaves. The garden had been much neglected and the water-furrows which had been cut for irrigation purposes were almost choked with sand and dead leaves, but the soil was so fertile that the vegetables and fruit grew luxuriantly till Outa Thomas, the Bantu gardener, forgot to water them and found them shrivelled and dying from the heat.

The house stood in its own grounds, almost at the end of the one street that the village boasted, and in its bower of dark green foliage, under the old oaks and the sad-coloured gums, it made a pretty picture. The white gables that overlooked the garden were generally cobwebby and had streaks of grey and yellow running down them where the rain had left its traces after a winter-night's revel down the roof. The parson never bothered himself about that, and when the mason was called in periodically to attend to the thatch he was allowed to work his own will on the gables. The high stoep was grass

grown in patches, and underneath the steps the rank burweed had pushed up the cement. Below the stoep stood a row of gardenias, planted, it was said, by the builder of the house some twenty years ago from sprigs brought direct from Florida. In October they flowered and stretched, a wall of white that scented the whole neighbourhood, for several yards along the limpid water-furrow that ran before the house. Stepping off the stoep you walked a few yards towards the little wicket gate, and as soon as that had been passed you found yourself in the street that led through the village. A little farther down you came to the market square where never a market was held, flanked on the one side by the large, well built stone gaol, and on the other by the one architectural beauty of the village, the Dutch Reformed church. Then came a row of straggling village houses, all one storied, with green painted woodwork and with thatched roofs growing mushrooms and yellow senecio. If you felt inclined to walk farther, the road, which, as soon as it left the shadow of the last house, became rutty and uneven, brought you to the iron bridge that spanned the river. Standing there one gained a panoramic view of the tall ranges, perpetually blue with all shades of azure and cobalt. In the morning the grey mists clung around their tops and the sun shone fiercely upon their slopes; but in the cool of the evening, when the air was clear and calm and the scent of the flowers that grew in the river-bed was wafted towards you, the mountains revealed themselves in a new light. Like the changes in a manganese solution, ever altering, kaleidoscopic, there glowed in the ravines and around the coigns of the huge sandstone masses a wonderful contrast of colours, crimson, and all variations of red,

yellow like the colour of the veld daisies, blue like living sapphire or the deep shore-water of the sea. In the middle of the village stood the little Anglican church, an unpretentious structure, for the congregation that owned it was neither rich nor numerically strong. N—— was essentially a Dutch district, and though it had (and still has) a population of more than six thousand, not one thirtieth of that number were English or of English descent.

It was a back-veld district, and as such it had its interest and its attractions which could not be rivalled by any other district nearer to the all civilising power of the railroad. Of my father's parishioners there were many who had never seen the sea, and who had no adequate conception of what it was like or what it was useful for. Some, again, who had seen its waters at the nearest fishing station, which indeed was in the parish, were fond of it, and had their own boats. Though the South African Boer is essentially a farmer it is not improbable that he will prove an able and skilful sailor when he has had the training and experience necessary for that calling. Some of the farmers in N—— possessed their own boats at the fishing station and went to sea with as much confidence and handled their boats with as much skill as do the fishermen of Hastings. But these were usually the men who lived near the sea and were acquainted with its varying moods. They neither feared nor misunderstood it, and with that innate caution which is the main characteristic of the Boer they took care to incur no risks by rashness or neglect of precaution. To the others, to those who had never ventured in a boat, their hardihood seemed almost heroic; and when, as sometimes happened, an accident took place and one of the men got drowned it is to

be feared that less sympathy than criticism was lavished upon his relatives.

The village of N—— was comparatively small, its inhabitants numbering scarcely more than two hundred, with a population of some thousand natives who dwelt in what was locally known as the Camp. Three policemen, all natives, sufficed to look after the criminal class, and with the exception of stock thefts and occasionally a minor misdemeanour, they had very little work to do. The chief constable who acted as their inspector and as public prosecutor, was a European, but most of his subordinates at the gaol and in the streets were coloured men. The system worked well on the whole, although negrophilism is an absent virtue in the country districts in South Africa. The subordinates had very rarely to do with white men, for with a delicacy that spoke well for his good nature the chief constable generally contrived to be on the spot when a warrant had to be served on a Duisman, even though the offender was a mere vagrant. The native officials had to do principally with the coloured men and women in the location, and there they were looked upon as endowed with plenary powers. They lived in their huts in the location, their residences being, however, usually more commodious than those of their neighbours, and in their spare time occupied themselves with gardening or with some trade. The oldest of them was reputed to be a skilful barber, and Outa Hans's scissors and talent were in great demand, both among his own class and in the village. He owed his success in the tonsorial line mainly to the fact that he was the best informed gossip in the town and knew all the secrets long before anyone else dreamed of them. I can still see him, coming up with his dark blue helmet,

on which the coat of arms shone like a veritable sun, and brimming over with good nature and the latest information concerning the doings of everyone about whom he might chance to be asked.

There are few places on earth duller and more prosaic than an African back-veld town, and N—— was no exception to the rule. The inhabitants formed a little coterie in which everybody knew everybody else, Dutch as well as English, and lived together in amity and peacefulness. At the time of which I am speaking racial feeling was much less predominant than it is at present, and indeed at N—— it was conspicuous by its absence. The majority of the Dutch farmers, while keenly alive to the political situation, knew their English fellow districtmen too well to be suspicious of or angry with them, and the latter were too few to take any independent line of action with success. The electorate, of which the village was the centre, had always been solidly Bond, and there was not the smallest chance that a non-Bondsman would be returned, for the English vote was a negligible quantity and what there was of the native vote went whole-heartedly with the farmers. Occasionally, of course, wranglings occurred, as they will always occur in a village where there are two sets of politicians, but these only served to clear the air and make the subsequent fraternising the more agreeable. At the time of the Jameson raid, when most of the neighbouring towns were seething with excitement, the good people of N—— calmly discussed the matter for a few days and then amicably consigned the doctor and his men to oblivion and proceeded to arrange for their New Year celebrations. At present, judging from all accounts, this commendable state of affairs is changed.

Many of the men who wandered about in that garden, where the smell of the gardenias lay so heavy and oppressive on the summer air, and told the pastor all their griefs and cares, have perished on commando, rebels. Others have come in with the general surrender and are awaiting disfranchisement or whatever penalty Parliament may deem fit to impose upon them. The natives in the location have been turned into an armed defence force; the old church with its cock crowned Flemish spire has become a gaol, and the misnamed market-place a huge camping ground for the irregular forces.

Quiet, Sleepy Hollow-like old N—, for which the weekly arrival of the post cart was excitement sufficient to last for days, which the advent of a commercial traveller threw into a fever of anticipation, and the coming of Queen's birthday into an eagerness of preparation—how much must it have thrilled and throbbed when the war came to its confines and invaded its very streets. The little Karroo hills, outlying spurs of the great ranges beyond, were turned into improvised forts; the solitary street, called by courtesy the "main street," though there was no other with which it could be confounded, was bisected and trisected by rows of barbed wire and block-houses made of sheet iron; Outa Hans the barber policeman had been put into khaki and wore shoulder-straps and became tremendously more important; for was he not corporal in very person? And now and then from the neighbouring farms came the straggling groups of undesirables, men, women and children, and were herded on the market-place, or down near the river, where the troopers' horses had trampled down all the sweet-smelling evening flowers and disturbed the white herons at the

pools. Four years ago no one dreamed of such things and N— slept peacefully most of the day in summer and ate baked sweet potatoes in winter, no matter how agitated men's minds were concerning what was happening at Pretoria and in the States.

My father's parish was an extensive one. To travel from one end of it to the other needed a good horse and more than a day in the saddle, for the roads were mere tracks in parts, and even where the Divisional Council was supposed to look after them they were scarcely much better. Periodically, generally once every two months, the pastor went "house visiting," calling at every farm in a certain part of the district, holding service at some central point, baptising here, christening there, and interviewing as many of his flock as he could manage to find. Late on Saturday evening a Cape cart, drawn by four horses or six mules as the case might be, drew up in front of the house of one or other of the elders of the congregation who had been deputed to fetch the parson for one of these periodical visitations, and early on Monday morning the self-same vehicle stopped at the back door of the parsonage. The little native boy came slowly off his perch behind and stood at the horses' heads and the elder stepped round to the verandah to drink coffee and make his bow to the predikant's wife before her husband came out. Sometimes, as a treat, the pastor took one or other of his children with him; a holiday on a farm, away from the sleepy little village with its second class public school, was something to look forward to. Many a time have I sat beside the elder, listening to his tales of the veld and his stories (sometimes entirely apocryphal) about the wonderful powers of the puff-adder. On

such occasions one had to listen in silence, for though the parson's boy was in many ways a privileged youngster the principle that children should be seen and not heard is nowhere more respected than in the back-veld. These trips were extremely interesting although by no means comfortable. The Cape cart was generally heavy laden, for in addition to the personal luggage it bore the fodder for the horses and the long canvas manger (crib) which was attached to the cart pole whenever the animals were outspanned and given a feed. That happened every few hours, and as the outspans were in the vicinity of some farmhouse, often in the farmyard itself, the horses and cart were left in charge of the native retainer and pastor and elder and pastor's son retired to the house. In that way one made personal acquaintance with many of the most interesting characters, and had opportunities of noting how the real life of the people was spent. Sometimes the most surprising and out of the way incidents happened, but it was expected that these would be received in solemn and decorous silence, and a smile or an unsympathetic remark would have been resented as the height of bad breeding and discourtesy. One had to put up with many inconveniences and discomforts, but under all was the feeling that the people were doing their best for you and that they were striving their utmost to make your stay amongst them pleasant and agreeable. What matter if, as sometimes happened, their ideas and yours as to what was pleasant or delightful clashed?

On one occasion, arriving late at a little farmhouse near a magnificent salt pan on which the rose-coloured flamingoes stood in brilliant ranks, it was found that there was little accommodation for the night, but as the

horses were dead tired and the next farm was two hours away, the limited accommodation had to serve. After outspanning the animals and attending to their wants we entered the little cottage and were introduced to the inmates. My father knew them well, for he had often been there on house visiting work. The people were not poor (few of the back-veld farmers are) but they were content to exist in what to a stranger appeared to be the direst poverty. The furniture in the house was mean and roughly made, and there was an absence of those inartistic nicknacks which one generally observes in the houses of South African farmers. Outside stood a huge blue-gum tree in which a colony of weaver-finches had built their nests, and the droppings from the branches lay thick on the stoep which seemed as if it had not been swept for years. The women who came forward to shake hands with us were slovenly dressed, and one held on her arm a child whose eyes were almost closed from ophthalmia. They had not seen the predikant for almost a year as their farm was many hours' distance from the village and they had not thought it worth their while to come in to Communion (*Nachtmaal*) more than once during that time. The old woman had a lot to say and she at once engaged my father in an animated conversation regarding the unfilial conduct of her only son, a tall, handsome boy, who stood in the background, grinning aimlessly at the company generally, and who had not been able to master his catechism. When it became nearly time for supper Mrs. M—— busied herself with the table and by and by announced that "Mynheer may sit down and say a good word." The menu consisted of roast beef, decidedly tainted, home-made bread and butter, protea syrup

and delicious bush tea made from the leaves of a veld shrub that grew on the farm. Hungry as we were the smell of the beef was too much and as in Mrs. M——'s opinion it was the finest part of the meal she was naturally concerned that our helpings remained unattacked. Addressing herself to her son in a tone of tearful despair she asked him suddenly, "Henni, now whatever can be the matter with that meat? Why, *it was only yesterday when we found the cow dead in the field,*" and totally unconscious that her revelations would make the dish all the more impossible, she proceeded to relate how Henni and the native herd had come across the dead cow while they were tracking sheep, and as the animal had only died of a broken leg and was "entirely fresh yet," they had cut it up and brought home the meat.

On another occasion our host was one of the richest farmers in the district, a man who was reputed to be worth his thousands and who yet made a point of never wearing stockings or boots. Whether he did this for reasons of health, or not, has not been ascertained, but it was on record that only once had he been seen wearing shoes, and that was when he got married. Then, tradition had it, he put them on when he entered the church and took them off when he left it. That he was very rich there could be no question. His farm was extensive and fine and he took an interest in fruit culture, possessing a splendid orchard of apple and pear-trees. Among his fellow farmers he was respected as a shrewd and intelligent old man, one who knew a great deal about practical farming, and feared because he had a sharp tongue and could use it with sarcastic effect. It happened once that subscriptions were required for a church bazaar and everyone made some con-

tribution towards the collection, either in money or in kind. In due course the collectors came round to Uncle Tielman and solicited his aid, but Uncle declared he never saw much good in bazaars and gave them a small basket of his second best apples. Report had it (with how much truth it is difficult to say) that he kept his spare cash in his mill-house, of which he kept the key, and that he distrusted banks and converted all his notes into hard coin. Yet with all his wealth Uncle Tielman's house was hardly better than Mrs. M——'s, and his ideas of comfort did not include such a thing as a sofa.

These visitation trips lasted a week or ten days, generally beginning on Monday and ending on Saturday. On Wednesday it was usual to hold a special service at some central farm, chosen so as to give the neighbouring residents an opportunity of attending. The big waggon-house, a feature of every Cape farm, was cleared out, the carts and spring-waggons being drawn up immediately outside the door to afford more sitting accommodation for the worshippers, and bags of grain were ranged along the walls and in two lines down the middle of the building. On these were placed planks which served as seats. Owing to their temporary nature it not infrequently happened that one of the impromptu pews came down with a crash in the middle of the service, precipitating the occupants onto the bench in front which in its turn gave way. But these little accidents were taken in good part and rarely disturbed the congregation seriously. The pulpit was a deal box covered with a new table-cloth. In front of it, a couple of feet lower down, stood a smaller box, also covered with a table-cloth and this held the baptismal font, usually a soup-plate filled with water.

There were four services a day on the farm on such occasions, for as much as possible had to be made out of the parson. Early, before breakfast, there would be a prayer-meeting, attended only by the elderly people, and followed, after breakfast, by the main service in the barn. At this everyone was expected to be present as it was the Communion service, but following the rule which prevailed in the village, the children were allowed to leave the church just before the Communion service was begun. Then came dinner (the back-veld knows not of lunch at midday) and after that the Thanksgiving service (Dankzegging), which in its turn was followed by a short children's service. In the evening there was another service, usually however held in the dining-room and not in the barn as by that time most of the farmers had left for their homes. Between these various services the parson was expected to interview as many of his flock as he conveniently could, and indeed he had no difficulty in finding them, for all were eager to have a word with the predikant. Everything was laid before him; he was supposed to be an authority not only on legal and medical matters, but to have some commercial knowledge also, and to be able to give advice as to the merits of different traders, and even as to the best way of treating the latest disease among the beasts.

It is needless to say that on such special occasions the parson has to put up with more inconveniences and discomforts than at any other time. Yet on the whole he is treated as the first guest. The best room is given to him, and his hostess shows him by various little acts of kindness that if he is not comfortable it is not for lack of efforts and intention to make him so. Sleeping accommodation is then

necessarily limited, and the host and hostess have their hands full to provide for the many friends who take advantage of their hospitality. As the service is generally arranged to take place at one of the more important farms the discomforts are not however so great as they might otherwise be, and all shortcomings are accepted in a spirit of Christian resignation, and the courteously expressed warning, "You must take *verlief* (pot-luck)," smoothes many things.

On one occasion my father had to proceed to an adjoining parish of which he happened to be the Consulents, or acting minister, for the purpose of consecrating a new chapel that had recently been built. I accompanied him and shared his room for a few days, until the advent of some brother ministers, who had arrived to participate in the ceremony and who had greater claims to a feather bed than I, compelled me to seek others quarters. Our host, a courteous old gentleman, took me under his special charge for the night and assured my father that he would have no difficulty in finding me a place "with the boys." When we arrived at his house (for my former sleeping place had been in an adjoining residence) it was found that the inrush of new-comers had been so great that there was hardly room. The following morning would be the great day, and those who came had to be accommodated. The hostess came round and had a whispered conversation with the old gentleman, and, though I did my best to seem lost in contemplation of some cobwebs on the roof, I could not fail to overhear her remark that every room was full. "But we must find a place for the parson's son," said Uncle Ben, "surely he can sleep with the boys." The old lady made some demur, the purport of which I could not catch, but finally

I was ushered into the big dining-room and assigned a bed on the floor. For the dining-room had been transformed into a huge sleeping-apartment for the boys and young men, the majority of whom were already snoring. All the windows were closed and the atmosphere was insufferable, but neither of my neighbours on the floor thought it worth while to fall in with a suggestion that a little more air would be desirable. My host's son, who lay close at hand, informed me in an apologetic tone of voice that "lots more were coming," and a moment later added that his mother and sisters also wanted a place to sleep in, but that he hoped they would "not come here as the room is so hot already." Sure enough a few minutes later the old lady, attended by a bevy of daughters, appeared in the doorway, her head framed in an aureole of light made by the dripping tallow dip she carried in her hand, and demanded "Is there any room?" The son, however, snorted, and after a prolonged inspection of the forms on the floor the intruders retired from the scene, and we were left to sleep in peace.

While it is unfortunately true that the elements of sanitary science are absolutely unknown to the back-veld Boer, it must not for a moment be thought that he is carelessly unclean or incorrigibly apathetic. Little by little he is becoming more alive to the importance of cleanliness and the necessity of breathing pure air. In his abhorrence for the latter essential in his bedrooms he is no worse than the average rustic in England, who closes his windows tightly when he has a cold, or than some dwellers in cities who make a baking oven of their rooms in their anxiety to avoid a draught. Necessity often compels the Boer to sleep five abed, and for two to share the same bed is nothing

uncommon. Compelled as they are to make shift in a waggon, mother and father and brother and sisters all sleeping in the same narrow space, they think no harm in sharing one room in their house while they give up the spare room to some other family. On the farms the boys generally sleep in an out-house, and in the warm summer evenings either outside on the stoep or on the high hayricks on the threshing floor.

The great event in the village, both from a religious, a social, and a trading point of view, was the quarterly *Nachmaal* or Communion service. This took place in January, April, July and October, the attendance at the April and October Communions being far greater than on the other two occasions. As early as Friday you would see the waggons and carts driving into the village and on Saturday the whole place would be in confusion, for the population of N—— had suddenly been increased to almost two thousand. Then would take place the church bazaar, at which all sorts of produce and live stock were put up to auction and sold at very fair prices, and in the afternoon the preliminary Communion service would be held. On Sunday there would be several prayer-meetings and children's services and of course, principal event of the day, the Communion. Monday would see the old town gradually returning to its former peaceful quietude and the last departures of the country folk, and on Tuesday only the litter in the streets and market-place would show that there had been such great happenings two days before. October was in many ways the most important of these quarterly meetings, for that was the time when there was usually the largest number of candidates for confirmation. These came to the village a fortnight before *Nachmaal*

and attended classes which were held in the vestry of the church. Now and then they came up to the parsonage, and were initiated into the mysteries of the microscope or magic lantern, or were shown some simple chemical experiments which interested them vastly. It must be remembered that they had never been able to learn any science; many of them knew little beyond their Bible and catechism and thought it all sufficient if they had some acquaintance with their hymns. Yet there were quick wits among them who grasped a subject readily, and entered into a totally new and strange matter with remarkable intelligence. One of the most noticeable points with regard to these young farmers was the fact that few of them seemed to have any notion of accurate observation. Such a thing as a field naturalist is rarely to be found among them, and that is all the more to be wondered at when one thinks of the wide scope there is for the study of nature on the veld. The most astounding mistakes with regard to the common objects around them were common, mistakes not in cases of scientific fact but of ordinary observation. Thus for instance it was a prevailing fallacy that the puff-adder struck backwards and that a

scorpion's bite was more to be dreaded than its sting.

Life in a Cape parsonage is undoubtedly interesting, and to the cultured parson who understands his people and is able to take an active share in their life it offers unlimited scope for work. There is perhaps no one whose influence is so great with the great mass of farmers in the colony. The doctor and the member of parliament have their spheres of activity and influence, but they cannot stand comparison with the predikant, and the wilder and more uncivilised his parish, the greater is his power and the more predominating his influence. With all their faults and failings no one who has lived and consorted with the Cape Boers can fail to like them, and the more one understands them the more that liking grows. Hidden under a rough exterior, obscured by faults and vices which at times seem more than superficial, overshadowed moreover by a religion that in dogma at least is pitilessly morbid and dark, lie sterling good qualities which only need sympathy and a little of that fellow feeling which makes the whole world kin to be brought out in bold relief.

F. W. B.

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

THE reader need not be afraid. Into the aching sea of confusion which those powerful and scarcely benevolent deities, the bigot, the demagogue and the pedagogue, have tossed into angry storm, these few paragraphs will not invite him to plunge. Let us rather sit on a rock, and contemplate the tempest, and consider a little what raised it.

We shall not be far wrong, if we trace its causes ultimately to the misplaced activity of the modern State. Shall we be mistaken in saying that the roots of society are in the family? It is in the secure cradle of the home that ideas are formed and affections shaped, which will last, with little essential modification, through life. It is there that the conceptions are framed which the State can only protect. And it is this family life that the Act of 1870 (well-intentioned, careful, and incurably unimaginative) destroyed, so far as it could.

It set up a dual control over the children of England. The persons responsible for the upbringing of a child were no longer to be its parents. Into the home there was pushed the force of another authority, the teacher. How could the parents feel the old solemn and tender relationship still to subsist, when the child was now liable to be torn from them and handed over for the best part of the day to the treatment of strangers, to be forced to herd with any sort of companions, to be subjected to the rough discipline that a class of sixty must entail? It was impossible, and anyone with a particle of insight could have seen it to be so.

Put it on the lowest ground. Take the question of mere physical health. In a typical northern town of medium size, not long ago, diphtheria became almost endemic. When the Medical Officer courageously closed the elementary school in the worst district, there were raised immediate and loud complaints. His critics would have chosen to stem the progress of the disease by any rather than by this means. They were not without their nostrum; which, as might have been expected from the devotees of main force, was compulsory isolation in its most remorseless form. Whilst they were urging the merits of this latter device, and expatiating on the direful results which were likely to ensue from allowing sick people to die in peace at their own houses, it became necessary to close another school. The idea then occurred to somebody, that there might be a primary source of infection somewhere, and that children might contrive to contract the disease otherwise than from the diphtheritic houses which they were in the habit of making their intimate resort. The schools were looked at, and it was discovered that the unhealthy arrangements of one at least of them were sufficient to account for anything. True, this should not have happened. But it did happen; and no amount of popular control sufficed to prevent it. What risks his child is to incur in the pursuit of knowledge is apparently a matter which it is no longer for an English parent to decide.

Pass to less patent, but more dangerous, risks. Is there anything

which, in theory, is more entirely within the province of the parent than the choice of his children's companions? Is there anything less likely to be practicable, under a compulsory system? The Japanese sage, Yekken, was wiser than our modern dictators. "Better for a child," he says, "to lose a year's study than to consort for a day with a base companion." Scarcely less important than the choice of companions, is the choice of habits to be inculcated. This too is withdrawn from the parents' control, as is apparent from the following instructive example.

John Brown (let us so call him, for there is no need to be personal) entertained a prejudice against militarism and self-assertiveness in the gross. In particular, he preferred the old-fashioned standards of delicacy and gentleness for his daughter, and he was so eccentric as to believe that soldiers' drill might probably exercise some influence in the opposite direction, if she were to devote a regular attention to proficiency in it. Now there is, at the moment, a dreadful suspicion haunting the minds of official Scotsmen that the fibre of the nation is being sapped. Scotsmen are never afraid, so it is enough to say that they are very seriously considering, and have gone so far as to take evidence. One does not read evidence of opinion unless one is obliged; few, therefore, may be aware that the proposed panacea, which is to restore vitality to an enfeebled race, is drill. Not to be behind the times, the local authorities of John Brown's district introduced drill incontinently into their curriculum, on hearing of its quasi-miraculous efficacy. John told them he did not like it; said, in fact, that he preferred the school course without it. They replied that it was part of the course of study, and must be gone through. He repeated his

objection. He told his daughter she must not drill; they refused to teach her unless she did. Constitutional lawyers tell us of the unpleasant predicament of the soldier who is liable to be hanged by a court if he obeys an order, and shot by his officer if he does not. In the equally ambiguous circumstances of the present case, with parental and scholastic penalties hanging over her, according as she drilled or not, the girl elected to follow the Fifth Commandment; and so she was excluded from the school. Her father was then summoned to answer for not causing her to attend, and an inferior court held that his explanation, that he strongly objected to what she was required to do there, was no excuse.

When Parliament decided that all children must learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, did any fanciful member (if such there are) dream of so grotesque a perversion of its intentions? The apology which will occur to those who want a cheap salve for their consciences may be that the schools are under popular control. What consolation is it to the individual parent that ten or twelve thousand of his fellow-citizens care nothing about his grievance? Is it so much pleasanter to have a child taken from you by fifty people than by one? Moreover, in point of fact, the boasted popular control of the Board Schools is entirely illusory. To control an electoral machine is an art which requires professional devotion and the efforts of a life-time. The ordinary common-place elector is decidedly too busy, making ends meet, to attend to it. His choice is between the Blues and the Buffs, and it is not much, to have one's choice of tyrants. One may as well be swallowed by an alligator as a crocodile.

If he cannot control the machine for himself, however, are there not

plenty of people ready to do that for him? Unfortunately, no one can pretend that there are. There is a sufficient supply of persons willing to manipulate the wires, but not according to his wishes. For one thing, they do not know what his wishes are. For another, they think they know them so much better than he does. Their first concern is to secure a Board which is either pro-voluntary or anti-voluntary in its composition. To do this effectively, they must put forward candidates who are influential, pushing and well-known. Educational fitness, sympathy, tact, consideration, far-sighted perception, are qualities which are regarded as entirely ornamental. A Board so elected must necessarily leave the real working of its schools for the most part to its expert officers. Far be it from us to suggest that the members of Boards do not take a deep and active interest in the work of the schools. But it is the interest of an amateur. The members of the Board are not, and do not feel themselves, qualified to interfere with the daily routine, and their scope for doing so is very limited. Their business is not to produce good schools, but to satisfy the demands of the Education Department.

Popular control, therefore, resolves itself into control by a committee, appointed by a clique, and supervised by a bureau. That the bureau is itself appointed by a minister, who is selected (to suit party exigencies) by the leader of a party, which is bitterly opposed by something like half the voters in the country, deceives nobody. We do not think the control much more popular on that account. Engineers tell us that nine-tenths or so of the force generated by a boiler is dissipated in the process of turning the energy into work. It is to be feared that *popular control* undergoes a similar diminution, before it suc-

ceeds in passing through the local caucuses, the parliamentary majority, the cabinet, the education minister, and actually impinges on the permanent secretary.

And if the popular control of schools were as real as it is imaginary, it would none the less be an intrusion of an alien authority (the popularly-appointed teacher) between parent and child. One could understand such a system, if the government were to make up its mind to abolish family life, and to substitute barrack-life for it. But the framers of the Act of 1870 did not want to do this. It was so easy to enact that children should all be educated, and so difficult to say in blunt terms that their parents should not be consulted in the matter, that the legislators did not look the question in the face. They left the crucial responsibility with the Boards, which had to frame bylaws, and the Department, which had to approve them. And the Department, unnoticed, made and approved its model bylaws, which have undermined the relation of parent and child throughout the length and breadth of England.

They have virtually taken authority over the child away from those who naturally regard it with sympathy and interest, and who are thrown into intimate contact with it, and they have invested with a new and imperfect control persons to whom the young soul is, primarily, the raw material of their daily subsistence, an undistinguished unit amid a troublesome crowd. The old power and protection against all comers, which the parent exercised, are dissolved. And yet we wonder there are Hooligans! And yet we lament the want of respect in the young for their elders!

A great deal of talk is heard now

about the propriety of consulting the wishes of individual parents in regard to the particular religious instruction which shall be given their children. And all the time we ignore their wishes, ostentatiously and entirely, in every single other matter. Will a Board or a Bench take the slightest notice of a parent's individual wishes, if he does not like the teachers or the tone of an elementary school? Will it listen to him while he declares that its atmosphere is ungentle, or repressive, or stern, or too full of levity?

We know very well it will not. And it is tragical that the only complaint that has a chance of being listened to, is—that the atmosphere is Dissenting or Catholic. Surely there are good Catholics, and bad Catholics, good Protestants, and bad Protestants, good Jews, and bad Jews! Strange as it may appear, there is not the slightest doubt that some people would prefer to entrust a child to a sensible and kindly teacher who did not profess their own religious opinions, rather than to a shallow and vain one who held them with the utmost fervour of conviction. The ultimate end of religion (Ritualistic vicars have been known to say as much) is to raise the character of its votaries; yet an English parent must put his children's character at the mercy of anyone who possesses the ability to earn a grant, and professes the same set of speculative opinions as himself. Could absurdity go further?

It is far more important that a person should be sympathetic and considerate, than that he should be a Plymouth Brother; far more important that one should be independent and open, than that one should be the strictest of Strict Baptists. And it is by the numberless little touches of constant intercourse, that character grows, or is

distorted. There is no need that a teacher should be a bad man in order to make his influence an undesirable one. If he is nothing worse than an opinionated man (and many teachers are opinionated),—if he is nothing worse than a cross man (and teachers have been known to be cross),—a parent is perfectly entitled, in all conscience, to tell his employers that his certificate and his Congregationalism do not fit him to mould the lives of little children.

Children have always been treated *de haut en bas*, and suppressed or petted according to taste, from the days of Jesus of Nazareth and earlier. Their wonderful imaginativeness enables them not to mind. But that does not absolve us from our duty, which is to surround them with the best and most ennobling influences at our command. The present fever for education is a selfish symptom, for the most part. It means fear of Germany, fear of the North American Union, with their organised intelligence, directed to frankly materialistic ends. It is a poor enthusiasm. A headlong fear which seeks to safeguard prosperity by grinding the youth of the country into more perfect machines for industrial and military effectiveness, will not do much good for the cause of education; and the prosperity resulting from its disinterested foresight will not prove to be of the most salutary or lasting description. "Force of heart will hold its own against fire-balls." Industrial competition derives its terror, in the long run, from its military backing. In its presence, we may either try to crush out the human virtues of brain and heart, in the vain attempt thereby to improve our industrial and military machine, or we can leave machine-made prosperity and power to others, and set ourselves to produce heroic and beautiful

character, which will dominate all machines, human and metallic.

Seemingly we do not care to try. Perhaps we murmur something hopeful about the Sunday School. If we do, we show that we know less than nothing about that institution. But, willing as we may be to entrust the morals of the younger generation in the mass to the uncovenanted mercies of the Board School, have we any right to say that individual parents shall accept the same easy faith? Is it rational that we should dictate to them conformity with the national worship of Fortuna?

It is of no use attempting to sit on two stools. Either let us candidly confess the family system a failure, and set to work to organise England on the model of Sparta, or let us maintain it in its integrity. The only way to accomplish this is to withdraw the compulsory system of the old Act, with its invidious network of spies and summonses. The home is an organism which will not stand rough handling. Family life, high and low, has been the foundation of our national solidarity in the past.

It will not be so for very long in the future, unless there is a speedy change in our educational methods.

Let it once more be repeated that the present bitter controversy and scandal is the simple outcome of the amazing fact, that the State has taken over the child, with entire indifference to the thoughts and wishes of the individual parent, and with complete (one would like to say criminal) disregard for the subtler ethical influences of its schools. Accidentally, its cast-iron decrees have come into conflict with a principle which it is conventionally indecent to ignore—the right of a parent to determine his child's religion. His right to cultivate its character has never enlisted the zeal of sectaries, and it has gone by the board. It is perhaps characteristic that the country should accept the result (a mannerless and useless proletariat) and trust to muddling through to a fat national exchequer, by the delayed favour of Providence, in spite of Teuton and Yankee. But it is not sensible; and one can hardly call it Christian.

THOMAS BATY.

A THIRSTY CRUISE.

IN these days when the public interest in the men of the Royal Navy is so strong, and any instance of inhumanity or even carelessness on the part of their officers would meet with such general indignation, it is interesting to an old sailor to recall the very different state of affairs which prevailed in his youth; when the comfort of a ship depended only on the character of her captain, untrammelled by a public opinion which virtually had no existence.

The following chapter of personal experience will serve to point the contrast. Such possibilities may seem in closer relation to the days of Queen Anne than to those of the great Queen we have so lately lost, and the figure of Captain Lordling more worthy of the pen of Smollett than of any later writer. But Smollett did not know him, and I did; and hence my excuse for the yarn, culled from my Midshipman's Journal. It is sixty years since I was serving as a midshipman on board H.M.S. XENOPHON in the South Seas. She was one of the finest frigates then afloat, but equipped and disciplined no better than the ships which fought with Jervis, and which Nelson led to victory. Indeed in one respect there had been a retrogression from the olden days of the Navy, for whilst we read that in the year 1593 Elizabeth's great Admiral, Sir Richard Hawkins (known as "the complete seaman,") had a distilling apparatus on board his ship, and found the water so distilled to be "wholesome and nourishing," we in the middle of the nineteenth century had no such standby, and paid dearly for our ignorance.

In the same seas, and dependent as Sir Richard himself on the winds for our motive power, our sole supply of water, once the anchor was weighed, lay in the limited quantity our tanks might carry or a chance squall furnish. Hawkins's distilling apparatus had been forgotten for two hundred years, and who can compute the misery its disuse had occasioned? The XENOPHON however wound up the list as far as Her Majesty's ships were concerned, an unenviable position she never could have held had her captain possessed the common instincts of humanity, or had the wholesome dread of the lash of public opinion constrained him to make an appearance of what he was incapable of feeling.

Captain Lordling, commanding H.M.S. XENOPHON, could claim high birth. He was a strongly built man, about fifty years old, obstinate and narrow-minded, and with a look of quite honestly-felt contempt for all whom he conceived to be beneath him in birth and rank. The possession of influential friends had, in accordance with the custom of the time, made him a post-captain at the age of twenty-five, and thenceforth, for some twenty odd years, he had devoted himself to the more congenial life of a club man in London, and left his profession to take care of itself. This, however, involved expense, and at that time the command of a man-of-war on the Pacific Station meant for the captain the certainty of securing a large sum of money, often amounting to five or six thousand pounds, which was paid for freightage of gold and silver collected on the coast of

Mexico and carried to England. There was then no safe transit across the Isthmus of Panama, and it is obvious that specie perhaps representing a million sterling could not be safely carried in the merchant vessels of the period. Here then was the only cause which could induce our highborn captain to forsake the sunny side of Pall Mall, and in mature age to face the discomforts of a sea life once more.

We soon discovered that, as regards seamanship, he was nowhere, that he had no interest in his profession, and was horribly bored by the routine and discipline necessary on board ship. Fortunately the Admiralty, with a remnant of foresight, when entrusting the *XENOPHON* to such a captain, took care that the other senior officers should be first class men, or our commission might have been as disastrous for the country as it certainly was for ourselves. It is not to be supposed that Captain Lordling could condescend to friendly intercourse with his inferiors in rank. How much they had reason to regret this circumstance a droll incident which took place whilst we were at anchor in the Bay of Callao will show; and it is besides too strikingly illustrative of the man's character to be omitted.

Wishing to make an excursion to Cordilleras, he fixed upon our dear old surgeon as his companion, and most unwillingly the recipient of the honour consented to accompany him. They started, furnished with guides, and all went well until they reached the Auperperimac Pass. Here there is an awful chasm, which must be crossed in a wicker basket slung on ropes and travelling from side to side, while a hundred feet below a river roars and rushes through its clouds of spray. The crossing cannot be made at all save in the early morning, for with the day a wind comes up the gorge, which tosses the light bridge hither

and thither and renders the chasm impassable. The doctor, seeing that there was some risk, jumped into the basket and crossed first, Captain Lordling following. Immediately the latter was clear of the perilous conveyance, he proceeded to call his companion to account for the gross impertinence of presuming to precede his commanding officer, and requested him to state his reasons for such an unheard of breach of etiquette. No special reason occurring to him, the doctor, equally astonished and indignant, declined the further pleasure of Captain Lordling's company, and made his way back to the ship with all speed, whilst the captain continued his expedition in lonely grandeur. In two days' time, however, he also returned on board, and immediately put the doctor under arrest, to be tried by court-martial for contempt of his commanding officer. It took several weeks of tactful labour on the part of the first lieutenant to convince him that the charge could scarcely be sustained, and not till then was the doctor freed from arrest.

From Callao in 12° South Latitude we were ordered to proceed to San Blas, a port on the coast of Mexico in 23½° North Latitude. The distance being about two thousand four hundred miles, the passage through both Trade Winds as a rule occupied three weeks, and for this the *XENOPHON* carried more than a full supply of water, so that it occurred to no one to suppose we should run short of the first necessary of life. We left Callao on February 16th, and on the eleventh day out the Galapagos group was sighted, and we came to an anchor in Post Office Bay, Charles Island. Here we hoped to replenish our water tanks, and even the enjoyment of the strange flora and fauna of this most distinctive group of islands sank into insignificance beside

the (literally) burning question of how they were to be filled. But no water could be obtained, and we sailed without any further supply. It was from this time that our ill luck began.

For sixteen days we remained becalmed within sight of land, drifting to and fro, crossing and re-crossing the Equator with wearying iteration. On the seventeenth day we got a slant of wind, and losing sight of the islands, hoped we were fairly off at last. But it was not to be; in two days the wind dropped again, and we lay once more at rest on the motionless calm. Thirty-six days out, and barely one third of the distance done!

On March 20th the order was given to stop all water for washing purposes. It was a necessity, and as such it was accepted, but when it was seen that Captain Lordling had no intention of setting an example, and that his own ablutions continued daily, it is not surprising that his unpopularity increased. Another week passed, and still we lay at the mercy of the wearisome calm, its monotony only broken by an occasional turtle hunt. It was now the seventh week out from Callao, but still our aching eyes looked in vain for signs of a coming breeze. The sails were furled, for they were only beating themselves threadbare with the heave of the ship in the oily sea, as they flapped against the masts and rigging. Coming on deck and glancing at the sail-less yards made it seem a mockery of being at anchor in a safe port. The sun stared vertically at us from a steel-blue sky, and under the double awnings the pitch ran liquid from the seams, clogging our feet as we walked the deck.

And in the midst of these surroundings the order was given to reduce the allowance of drinking water to one pint per day for each officer and man. This allowance was served out in one

issue at noon, during the men's dinner hour. The meal consisted of salt junk so long in brine and so hard that it could take a handsome polish in skilful hands, or of pork that shrivelled in the boiling to little more than hard rind. It was this delectable fare which inspired the ditty well known to all naval men,

Salt horse, salt horse,
What brought you here,
All the way from Portsmouth pier
After many a kick and hard abuse
You are salted down for sailors' use.

The result of such a diet of course was that when their dinners were over, not a drop of water remained to the poor fellows for the next twenty-four hours of burning heat. The few who tried to save some found it impossible, for they had no place in which to secure it from their improvident ship-mates. In this strait the men fell back on vinegar, of which each mess had a liberal allowance, but in their raging thirst they were not satisfied merely to moisten their mouths with the strong acid; they mixed it with salt water and drank it in large quantities, and the terrible effect may be imagined, as knocked over by this horrible mixture they rolled in agonies in the forecabin.

With the officers of course it was different though the allowance of water was the same. Their food was not so thirst-provoking; they could save the precious pint, and even eke it out with a little wine or beer. Mine I locked in my sea-chest, and had it been the Koh-i-noor I could scarcely have valued it more highly.

But what about Captain Lordling? Had he any sympathy for the gallant fellows he commanded? I know not, but this is what he did. For himself he reserved not only an unlimited supply of drinking water, but also an ample sufficiency for washing pur-

poses. Every morning the steward used to carry the dirty soapy water down the ladder on the way to his sanctum, and every day from the marines' berth at the foot of the ladder half a dozen or more stalwart Joeys were on the look-out for his appearance. The instant he descended, the vessel was dragged from him, and its contents eagerly divided among the thirsty crowd. The steward complained to the captain, but nothing came of it; it seemed to him quite natural that some should suffer and others enjoy, and there was no more to be said.

It was now decided to make for Yestapa, on the coast off Central America, an anchorage some two hundred miles distant, and we arrived there when sixty days out from Callao. Who can describe our relief when we reached that marvellous tropical coast, with its coral beach and stately palms, backed by volcanic mountains, and saw between their deep ravines the downward plunge of stream and torrent to the sea? We thought our privations were ended, for although we could see no break in the thundering roll of surf which the mighty Pacific sent combing on the beach, we learned from an English brig which lay there, shipping a cargo of indigo, that the Indians had filled their water-casks and doubtless would do the same by ours. The boats were sent to seek a watering-place, but after a careful survey the officer reported that landing was absolutely impracticable except for the light Indian canoes and catamarans. The Indians were appealed to and immediately offered to raft off a full supply of water for the sum of twelve hundred dollars.

When this news spread (and spread it did like wildfire), never a doubt had we but that our good time was come, and that our thirsty souls would drink and live. But well as we knew our

captain, there was a little yet to be learned about him. "Why," he said at once, "the Admiralty might make me pay the money. It's too much! I won't give it!"

Still we did not entirely relinquish hope; a smaller offer was made to the natives, and this they resolutely declined. Things having reached this point, the senior officers, with the doctor, took the extreme course of urging the captain to reconsider his decision, pointing out how much the men had suffered, and the gravity of the responsibility which he incurred. But all was of no avail; our chief was obdurate, and the sole result of their intervention was an order to get under way. The men, therefore, who would gladly have risked their lives to obtain water from the beach, had now, without an extra drop to moisten their parched throats, to heave up the anchor and turn their backs on the land of promise as we made for the open ocean. Sore and sullen were all our hearts, and serious consequences might have ensued among the men, had it not been that a breeze sprang up and their hopes with it. The great mountains faded in the blue distance, and night fell on the sails sweetly asleep as the stately frigate swept through the sea. Alas, next day the sun rose on a breathless calm! We had not out-sailed our ill-luck, and it was with us again.

One day the clouds began to gather, until a huge dark mass hung pendant in the heavens. Under this, the sea began to boil and foam, then a long, black arm descended; a rapidly moving spiral column of smoking water leaped to meet it, and thus a water-spout was formed; soon that cloud was full to bursting. Oh! what a joy as it climbed over our mast heads! We knew it must burst on us! Then out of the gloom and darkness came the blessed rain, as

if the water-spout itself had fallen. Awnings were spread and looped up. Hoses were led from them to the tanks. The scupper holes were plugged, every receptacle was filled. The decks became a surging lake in which all hands rolled and drank. Past privations were forgotten, and although the allowance of water was still kept at a pint per day, yet every bucket and mess can was full, and Jack once more cut a shuffle on the fore-castle, and sang of the Lass that loves a Sailor.

The seventy-seventh day from Callao found us still some six hundred miles from our destination, with only a few tons of water left. The sun, which had a declination south of Callao when we left, had overtaken us and was sending slanting rays from the north, but still the heat was intense, baking our black hull as if it were an oven.

The allowance of water was reduced to half a pint per day, and our sufferings were greater than ever. Not Captain Lordling's though! He strode up and down the quarter-deck, healthfully perspiring at every pore, whilst on the fore-castle grim Death claimed its victims from the poor creatures who had sought relief from their thirst in salt water and vinegar.

Every precaution had been adopted to prevent the men drinking this appalling mixture, but it could not be entirely stopped. Case after case was brought into the sick bay and treated by the doctors with every care. The first to succumb was a fine old seaman, the captain of the mast. A funeral at sea is always impressive, and under present circumstances it was more so than ever. The lower disc of the sun, in all the magnificence of the tropics, had touched the horizon. The ship's bell tolled solemnly as we gathered at the open gangway round the shapeless

form lying on the grating, weighted with heavy shot. Our worthy chaplain stood, book in hand, and when all was ready Captain Lordling came and took up his position apart. It was a pathetic scene, and our hearts were filled with sorrow and bitterness, which did not pass away when the sound of the sullen plunge had left our ears, and the white hammock, quivering as it shot down, had vanished in the depths.

All through this trying time the captain's live-stock, sheep and poultry, were supplied with no inconsiderable amount of water, while British seamen were thus dying for want of it. The discontent among the men rose high. We little midshipmen, who had friends among them, heard many an ominous growl which never reached the senior officers' ears. They, fortunately, were all popular, and while their private stock of beer and wine lasted, they had freely distributed it among their shipmates. This saved the situation. Even Captain Lordling did not discontinue the custom, then universal in the service, in accordance with which the captain would every day send from his own table a plate of fresh meat and pudding to be distributed by the doctor among the sick, and this was put to his credit. It was not much but it was something, for sailors are a forgiving race, and with them a little consideration goes a long way.

Tormented as the men were by thirst it is not surprising that many attempts were made to steal water from the deck water-tank. One man would decoy the sentry away, while another rushed in and turned the tap. The sentries were doubled, and some of the men, caught in the attempt, were flogged, receiving after the cruel custom of the time three dozen lashes of the cat. The strictest measures were also taken to ensure the empty-

ing of the tanks, the officer in charge having to examine each one after pumping. Still a few drops would elude every effort, and the captain of the hold (a first class petty officer) used to get into the tanks after the report was made, and gathering up with a sponge the small quantity of water which remained, he would fairly divide it between his messmates. No doubt he acted improperly, but so it was, and having been discovered he was brought before the captain.

On the quarter deck stood Captain Lordling supported by the first lieutenant; before him in charge of the master-at-arms was the prisoner, straw hat in hand, every line of his face speaking of honesty and pluck. His fault having been detailed, the captain asked him what he meant by stealing water, and thus robbing his shipmates.

"Please your Honour," replied the man, "I only sponged up that 'ere drop to save it wasting. It weren't no good to anyone else."

"No good!" repeated the Captain; "why did you not take it to your officer?" This staggered the poor fellow. He had not thought of that, so he said nothing. Then came the sentence. "I meant to flog you, but the First Lieutenant has spoken in your favour so you will only be disgraced to an A.B."

I think, while the hard-earned crown and anchor were being stripped from the man's sleeve, we all felt that if the objects removed had been Captain Lordling's epaulettes, justice would have been more impartially served. But there was no help for it, and we stood by, and saw it done.

About this time we were but seventy miles from the port of Acapulco, where water could be easily obtained and again the senior officers represented the urgent necessity of putting in there, and again their representa-

tions were of no avail. The cause of refusal was pretty well understood. The sooner we reached San Blas the sooner would the specie come on board, to Captain Lordling's very material benefit. So Acapulco was left behind, unvisited. We now kept in with the land, and under the influence of the land and sea-breezes made fair progress. At last on May 20th we sighted the anchorage of San Blas, and the order was immediately given to serve out a gallon of water to each man. Discipline was forgotten in the wildest, most joyful confusion as it was issued. And so, ninety-three days after leaving Callao, our privations came to an end. For the last seventy-seven days of our voyage we had averaged a speed of just one mile per hour, a record for slowness which I scarcely think the annals of sea life could beat.

Doubtless many of the ship's company were injured for the rest of their lives by the salt water and vinegar, but it may be a satisfaction to reflect that Captain Lordling was never one penny the worse. His peculiarities did not end with our thirsty cruise, and much might be written of them. Suffice it to say that they exceeded the licence which even aristocratic birth could command in those days, and before the XENOPHON's pennant came down he was called before a court-martial to answer for them. He then returned to club life and Pall Mall, and there happily for himself and others remained for the rest of his days. He has long since passed to the Beyond, whither also all his old shipmates have gone, except the writer of this tale and two others, who have lived to see the old order of uncontrolled power and severity in the Navy drift into the limbo of things that have been, but never can be again.

J. MORESBY.

THE EVOLUTION OF CHAN SEN.

I was privileged to meet Chan Sen at the house of a mutual friend (an Englishman) in Hong Kong. Even as Chinamen go, he was remarkable for the grace with which at dinner he told a number of commonplace falsehoods. He had lived in London and Singapore; perhaps this fact gave him a certain Western varnish that was engaging on a brief acquaintance. My friend had warned me that he was a character to fear in commerce, but to enjoy over a pipe. As I was not in Hong Kong on business, and was open to any impressions obtainable about the lotus-decked Far East, I prepared to enjoy Chan Sen, and I fancy he appreciated the compliment of my open interest in him. Be that as it may, when our host was called off suddenly in the middle of our symposium, Chan Sen, having been invited to amuse me in my friend's absence, looked at me very steadily for a moment or two across his opiumised atmosphere and said: "I shall amuse you, if you like, with the story how I took first to trade."

That did not sound very encouraging, but there was a twinkle in the old fellow's narrow eyes, and his large mouth moved so humorously at the extremities, that I suspected there might be more in the pie than appeared. "It will delight me very much," I said. "But is not the trading instinct in all your countrymen?"

The old gentleman's hands fluttered forth a vehement protest. "The white flower of innocence alone could lead you to ask such a question," said he. "*Mon Dieu!*"—he was exces-

sively cosmopolitan in his phrases—"what would my eternally respectable father have thought of you? I must inform you that he struggled as a student to the last. He worshipped the letters, in my opinion to his misfortune and mine, and though he earned scarcely more than two taels a week, he rated the rich merchants of the towns as so much river-mud and nothing better. However, that's neither here nor there, Mr. Bathurst, and it is an old fashion. I'm a Doctor in letters myself, but I'm an honest and honourable man first of all. That's why I wear European clothes more than the esteem-inspiring violet silk to which I am entitled. But behold, I wander in the web of my own making. I take another whiskey-soda and proceed."

Now I saw that something good ought to come from Chan Sen on such a text. His previous serenity of expression had become troubled and as he peered at me over his tumbler he looked nothing less than a very wicked old Chinaman. I fancied I could see him supervising the decapitation of a row of kneeling wretches, and yawning decorously in the midst of the bloodshed. "I begin like the stories of my own country, Mr. Bathurst, with my parentage. I was born at Ngan-lo-foo, in the Houpé province, of poor but virtuous parents. From my mother I learnt all the best that remains in me—far down; and from my father I acquired an admiration for literature which European experience has, I am glad to say, long since taken out of me. You know about the Emperor Ming Ti and

Confucius. Confucius so often said 'The Most Holy is to be found in the West' that the Emperor sent ambassadors to see if they could find it. The silly men went no farther west than your India, where they found the god Fo. That satisfied them. They ought to have gone all the way to London and Piccadilly like me. The Most Holy is plenty of money and pleasure. I laugh at letters since I was in England."

"Am I to believe that?" I interrupted, for his merry eyes had a kind of challenge in them.

But he shrugged and laughed as he continued, "My dear sir, you believe what your nice archbishops teach you and be comfortable. Never mind, if I have a little joke. But, as I say, my father was not at all clever, poor man. He had not passed his bachelor examination when I was born, and when I was twelve years old he still had not passed it. This made him sore in the temper. It was no wonder, for who, loving his own cat beyond everything, would not lose patience if he did not once for years receive anything but scratches in return for fish bones? It was the same later still. You may perhaps laugh, but it is true that when I was old enough to try my own hand at the first examination, there also was my father, monumental in his perseverance and constant in his failure. I was successful and might, had I pleased, have married the daughter of an eighth-rank Mandarin as my reward. But for my unfortunate parent there was the bastinado once more. Until now, he had always seemed to treat his whippings as very just and useful stimulants to exertion. This last however was the straw that broke the camel's back. He cried through the town about his disgrace and (I grieve to say this of him, but it is true) when he returned

to the house, he beat my mother and he would have beaten me also if I had not protected myself with a lantern pole. He did a worse thing. He cursed literature and, taking a rope into his own private study, he hanged himself in the middle of the room, before a very handsome little Buddha which was the one really valuable article of property he bequeathed to me." Chan Sen's emotion in these words was lively. He even wiped his eyes as he paused. And he did not go on with his story until he had refilled his pipe, accepting in the meantime my murmurs of sympathy and disgust (disgust with his country's institutions) in the most impassive manner imaginable.

"No, we are not bad," he said at length. "We are different, that is all. We do not put our old fathers and mothers in the work-prison-houses, as you do; and we teach our children manners. But we are like you in this, and I am sorry to say it; we learn much that is noble about good deeds and virtue, and we—ahem! pardon me!—we behave the prig, as you call it, very much. But I think you are worse, Mr. Bathurst, if you will forgive me the liberty with which I expose the truth that is in me."

I forgave him freely. Whether he was correct or not in his comparison of the defects of the Chinaman and the Englishman will be better known to others than to me. I ventured to tell Chan Sen of the ethical strain of the copybooks on which we as children are brought up. He professed to be enchanted by the information. "The Great West, sir," he exclaimed, "much resembles the Great East. On my poor father's study wall there was a slip which said *Patience is the pea in the ground*. And yet, you see, he destroyed himself, though from the most worthy motives.

"But I will go on with my history. You may be surprised, but I declare to you that this distressing domestic calamity filled me with shame for my own success in the schools. I felt no pride in my blue gown with the black border, nor yet the silver bird which I was permitted to wear on my cap. My old schoolmaster was much annoyed with me that I did not enjoy the honours that were ready for me like ripe pomegranates. We walked together hand in hand by the river Han Kiang and he poured maxims into my ready ear, but I was a doubter thus early and the more so because of my mother's sorrow in the loss of my father. She bewailed him day and night, and when weeks had passed I used still to seek her on his tomb, where she cried to him in vain, lamenting his failure at the examinations and—oh dear me! you know what women are, Mr. Bathurst, even when they are our own mothers. I hope I was a good son to her. I'm sure I tried to be. But let us skip a little and come to her end, which was the consequence of so much pinning, with little nourishment, for I regret to say that we were very hard up. She called me to her bed one night and said 'My son, I am going from you, but before I go I wish to join my curse to your dear father's. Let it rest for ever on the stone-hearted Mandarin who selected for the thesis of his last failure so difficult a subject.'

"'But, my mother!' I felt it incumbent upon me to demur, 'the same thesis which ruined my father brought me honour!'

"Then she gazed at me in pity under the green light of the lantern. 'Intelligent young fool,' she said, with very much sorrow, 'what are the disappointments of the young to those of the aged, who see the blue blanket of the very firmament itself slipping

from them while they stand waiting for much-yearned-for good fortune! Which merits the more honour, the tree that bears the apple, or the apple itself!'

"And again my stubborn reason broke forth and said, 'But supposing, my mother, the apple-tree bears only one apple?'

Chan Sen paused and drew his tumbler towards him. He drank, set it down, and went on. "This simple observation, Mr. Bathurst, had such an effect on my mother that she died in a convulsion of wrath. Of course, I had no intention of being unfilial—Heaven forbid! But the schools had set their wretched claw-mark on me and it was a pain to detect bad logic even in my own parent on her death-bed. I am sorry to say she died blaming me for a remark that she seemed to think reproached her for unfruitfulness."

"Poor old chap!" I was casual enough to exclaim; for, in spite of his age and exterior of refined reserve, such a blow in early life had evidently hit Chan Sen very hard.

He bowed politely. "Thank you," he said; "thank you, Mr. Bathurst. Now you see how I was prepared by Fate for a sudden change in my conduct. No man, least of all a Chinaman, could listen unmoved to the rebukes of a dying mother. From that day, I hated literature, and (you will be shocked) plotted how I could avenge myself on the Mandarin, Dr. Liu Chin, who had given the thesis *White clouds, blue sky and a young man in the pride of his strength!* Nothing could be more contrary to the virtuous teaching of all our great masters. But my mind had taken poison.

"One day, when I was brooding, the opportunity came. I was at that time earning my livelihood as teacher in the family of an estimable

leather-merchant, from whom I had already imbibed a regard for commerce, because it had given him wealth without corruption of heart. I had left the house for a stroll and was by the river bank when I saw a little boy, whom I well knew to be the only son of Dr. Liu Chin, paddling his fingers in the water. His nurse was asleep under a tree many yards away. There was a boat near. Well, you see what I did. Oh dear! it was such a very common piece of melodrama; but I did it. I caught up the child, tied him with my own gown and put him in the boat. Then, I am sorry to say, I beat the man's head with a stone till he died and threw him into the river. I was soon rowing down towards Hankow and the great Yangtse River as fast as I could, relishing my success very abominably, I assure you, and enjoying in particular the tears and wriggings of my small trophy, whose mouth I had shut very tight. I could see Liu Chin as he raved through the town demanding his child. And I could see too that no one would be likely to put two and two together in explaining my absence also; for I had not opened my heart to anybody, being always of a secret nature as a young man, and the Mandarin had repeatedly shown me kindnesses in encouraging me towards the examination for the second degree.

"What about my father and what about my mother?' I cried to the small struggler as we moved down the river; and while I worked the oar with my one hand I shook the clenched fist of the other at my prisoner."

"You did not kill him too, I hope?" I asked, coldly enough, for Chan Sen as a murderer had become somewhat repellent.

"Your benevolent mind, Mr. Bathurst," he replied, with another of his stately bows, "will be glad to know

that I did *not* kill the urchin. The other affair was not perhaps a work of necessity; I admit that I acted on impulse unusual in a scholar; but I have never regretted it, for had I left him his life he would have concocted some foolish tale about the boy's death or perhaps drowned himself in despair and left the Mandarin with no hopes at all about his little son. As it was, the fellow's dead body proved nothing except that there was a strong probability of the baby having been stolen. I meant to leave that sweet sting in the afflicted soul of the man who had confounded my father and brought upon me the maledictions of my mother. And my surmises were, as you shall hear, extremely correct.

"That voyage to Hankow was not nice. I had to work hard. I kept the boy quiet under rushes and he was very thin when, in the night, after several weeks, I took him out and carried him into the back streets (slums, you would say) of the great city. It diverted me to find on his body, the left thigh, the very plain mark of a bee. I understood too that it might be a danger for me, if a search for the child was made throughout the whole department. But I confess to you that I had had more than enough of hard living myself when I came to Hankow. By nature I am as fond of a good dinner as any Mandarin, and rice and fish wearied me after a time. I wished myself again at my good leather-merchant's table, where I was treated with profound respect, especially by the honest man's wife, who would have thanked Heaven, with tears, if I had consented to marry any one of her three daughters. But unfortunately they were all pitted by the smallpox and no amount of cosmetic could hide the marks.

"And now I will ask you, Mr.

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Bathurst, to jump a few years and behold me a candidate for the examination of the second degree. I will not disguise from you that in the meantime I had already dipped my hands in speculations not to be excused to the conscientious student of the Great Masters. I was associated with a small tea-merchant of Wochow and I took pleasure in trade. Besides that, I had tasted of the wayward sweets of the lottery in more forms than one. But there were times when I thought I owed it to myself to continue to fill my hands with the flowers which belong to the scholar alone, and though for the form's sake I professed to hate the dry sticks of literature, I did not abandon my studies. I laboured by the quiet midnight lantern and again at dawn when the little birds begin to sing.

"It was my duty as before to present myself at the provincial capital. I found it easy, oh! so easy, Mr. Bathurst, to make up a charming, indeed a pathetic, story of my absence from Ngan-lo-foo. The bereaved Mandarin wept with me when I told him of the domestic regrets which had exiled me. 'I too,' he said, 'have been smitten by the rough side of the hand of Fortune. But it is our duty to be brave. We will weep together while we drink warm wine in the quietude of my own parlour, but to the world we will show a level face and an unlined brow.'

"These words, Mr. Bathurst, were an ointment to my hurt heart. Liu Chin's little son was barefooted in Hankow and his stomach was not round enough to inspire a poem. I had attached him to a fisherman and the innocent child viewed me as his benefactor—one who had found him drowning and saved him. He was happily a boy of weak mental power and it was simple to impress upon

him just such an account of his origin as it suited me to create.

"'Dear and most completely venerable master,' I said to the Mandarin who had spread my home with thunderbolts, 'there is no comfort in life except in letters.' It may distress your western mind, Mr. Bathurst, when I inform you that over the wine-cup the worthy child-bereaved Doctor lifted a little of the mantle of his virtue and hinted to me of the iniquitous bribes with which he was tempted by certain middle-aged students.

"'I could rub their heads in the dust, my dear disciple,' he whispered to me; 'but I do not do it. There is always a little powder even in the best tea, and being a man it is not comely in me to pretend to be as a God.' Do you understand?"

Chan Sen's countenance so sparkled with mischievous suggestion that I boldly offered my guess. "Do you mean that he took those bribes?" I asked.

"My friend," he replied, "there are, I believe, no mines of pure gold in all the world, certainly not in China. As you may suppose, I had little difficulty in becoming a licentiate and winning a darker gown and a golden dickey-bird for my hat. And then I returned to my trade, which fascinated me extraordinarily. I admit that I meditated disgracing Liu Chin to the best of my ability by a direct petition to the Han Lin College, but I reflected that there would be personal inconveniences in such a proceeding. It was enough for me to see the good Doctor's little boy with broken finger-nails and every indication about him except his birth-mark of very low origin. Another year found me at Canton, where I made the acquaintance of your remarkable nation, Mr. Bathurst, for the first time. Here, thanks to

my trained mind and growing unbelief in the desirability of scholastic virtue, I prospered abundantly. I made friends with the European merchants and (do I surprise you?) found them not quite so clever as their majestic deportment had led me to expect to find them. Perhaps I was the grub in the apple. It does not matter what I was. I grew rich, so rich that I caught myself one day despising the hundreds of thousands of taels that were mine and asking myself this question: 'Why do I not aspire to the highest honour of all in the schools? Why do I not try to become a Doctor in letters?' You smile, Mr. Bathurst. . . ."

"Only because your story is so entertaining, believe me," I hastened to say. By this time, of course, I did not credit a word of it. Chan Sen's quaint seriousness was the best part of the yarn. So I told myself.

"Thank you, Mr. Bathurst," said Chan Sen. "I will hasten to the end, for it is not seemly in any man, even an emperor, to make a long story of his own life, which is a short matter at the longest and of no importance for instruction. That is my opinion, for we are made to live each in our own way and the less we accept guidance from others the better we ripen our own individuality. To every lantern its own candle. But I bore you. Alas! it proves to me that my seventy years are not only a dream.

"Imagine me therefore, Mr. Bathurst, with my millions at the age of forty and with all my ambitions satisfied except only this—that I am not a Doctor in letters. And now this last longing grows in me and I go with luxury to my native place and muse at the tombs of my father and my mother. Here I fancy my father speaks to me and says 'Hasten to Peking, my son, and grasp the goal

which a brutal incompetence never enabled me even to behold!' And, of a sudden, I exclaim 'It shall be so! I go!'

"I learn in the city that my dear Mandarin, Liu Chin, is now a Member of the Han Lin College and beloved of the Emperor and that his stomach is far too large to permit him to see his feet. Then, all wrapped up in my hopes, and feeling as high as a kite, I seek in Hankow the fisherman to whom I had attached the learned Mandarin's poor little son. I discover him with white hair and a skin disease and he tells me of the death of the boy through a falling mast. He is so tender and affectionate in his regrets that I leave with him a thousand taels and go away feeling neither joy nor sorrow, but thinking it a pity that so strange a birth-mark as that bee should have been wasted on this poor little lad, and that it should never have brought him back to his injured parent. For I no longer hated Dr. Liu Chin. I had lived long enough to become sensible and to realise that we must all die and that my poor father and mother were perhaps taken wisely from the miseries that attend on old age with discontent and a disturbed state of health.

"And so I arrive in the Capital of the Empire, Mr. Bathurst, with great determination. I have weak eyes from study, but I console myself that they shall soon be strong again and I hope my tutor deceives himself in his doubts about my ability to succeed where so many fail. He was as fine an ass as any in China, was my tutor, upright, laborious and poor. I have seldom laughed more enjoyably than when one day he gave me the melancholy intelligence that the lottery series with my name in it was not at all in request. 'Why, O learned one?' I ask him, with aching sides,

to give more sweetness to my tongue. 'Because, sir,' he replies, with the sad candour of the man of untarnished virtue, 'I have felt it my unfortunate duty to report that I do not think your myriads of taels will carry a mind grown sluggish in the pursuit of wealth through the needle's eye of supreme literary excellence!' He was a prosy old clown like myself, you perceive.

"But really it is odd what small matters help a man, even against probability, to attain his ends. The mention of the lottery speculation induced me to reflect. You know, or perhaps you don't, that we Chinese flutter our taels immensely on the roulette-table of the examination results. The candidates are registered and arranged in series by gambling managers. There is always a great run on the series with the names of men of acknowledged ability, for even the examiners dare not persistently pluck real merit. But there was no run at all on the series in which I appeared. I asked the vendors one after the other and I was offered the slips at a discount that became larger every day. And this to me as a successful merchant was a profound humiliation.

"Suddenly I learnt a thing. The good Liu Chin, to whom I had not yet sent my visiting-card, was said to be so much in the Emperor's favour that he might be expected to have a small voice in the preparation of the thesis, which the Emperor himself gives out to the candidates for the Doctor's degree. I dress myself with care and go in a chair that same day to the great Han Lin Mandarin, and I take with me an eager countenance.

"Ah! how we embrace, Mr. Bathurst! When it is over and I have rejoiced in the size of his stomach and the noble tranquillity of his

venerable countenance, I throw my dart into his mind. 'Incomparable Professor,' I say with ardour, 'do I declare myself to be of degenerate mind and memory when I whisper to myself that in the past the lovely child whom a vile dragon stole from your peaceful home wore upon his leg the mark of a bee with spread wings!'

"The question reached his heart. 'My friend,' he replied obligingly, with a gesture, 'do not squeeze more blood out of a wound that is closed. But it is as you remember. The bee was much pinched at the waist. It is mirrored eternally in the tears shed by my afflicted retrospections.'

"Then I seized Liu Chin by the hand and placed his hand to my heart. 'Its movement is all for your meritorious self, equal of Confucius!' I exclaimed with eagerness. And I hastened to tell him of a coolie working in the streets, a man of five-and-twenty, on whom I had but yesterday observed the bee-mark. 'Master,' I cried in conclusion, 'I will devote myself to the discovery of this man. It is less to me to achieve fame as a scholar than to make a distinguished scholar (one of the most distinguished) —to make *him* happy.'

"The tremblings that came upon Liu Chin in this news convinced me that I had, as you say, struck rich oil. He detained me. 'Do not put welcome wind into the empty bladder of my heart, I beg,' he whispered, 'unless you can keep it there.'

"'I will find him, though I fail in the examination,' I said again. Then, as I moved to go, he clutched me and I saw that the early love for his child was in him as strong as ever. He was a lonely old man, like myself, Mr. Bathurst, and was no doubt often afflicted by the thought of a barren funeral and no son to water his tomb with filial tears. I confess the thought

doesn't trouble me very much, but that is because my wisdom and Liu Chin's are of a different kind." Chan Sen shrugged his shoulders and continued.

"'Chan Sen,' the irreproachable Doctor whispered in my ear, 'I swear to you on my integrity that if you are not romancing, if you can restore my son to me, you shall be short of no honours in the examination. You may even be Tchoang Yuen.' That, Mr. Bathurst, is rather the same as your Senior Wrangler at Cambridge. First disciple of the Son of Heaven! Was it not a distinction to—you must forgive me if I amaze you—to go nap upon?"

"I made up my mind in a moment. 'Dear and most respected master,' I said humbly, 'I am no longer a youth to whom romances are interesting. I am a practical man. I'll find your son—by my parents! I'll find him. But I will exact my reward. Give it me in the character that you will do what you say, and I will find him.'

"That was asking a good deal, Mr. Bathurst. But I was bound to corner my market at that conjuncture. It came off too, as cheek does—doesn't it?—five times out of six. Liu Chin blushed and hesitated and then consented. 'You I may trust; I feel crystal-bright confidence on that point,' he said, as he moved towards the ink-stone. I left the good Doctor, feeling a number-one trader, I can tell you, Mr. Bathurst.

"It didn't take me long to find a young rascal who was glad to play the extremely comfortable part I had devised for him. The bee was wrought upon his thigh, correct in size, shape, and position; and I coached him carefully in a few details, leaving him to fill in the rest as he pleased, for I chose him for his intelligence, naturally. A week passed and then a

fortnight. By now the 'birth-mark' was nicely seasoned and I thought I might run to Liu Chin with the news. He wept on my neck.

"'There may, O Doctor,' I suggested, 'be some doubts to dissolve. I can only bring you the young man and leave you to interrogate him. The bee on his leg is all I can swear to.'" Chan Sen took snuff and sneezed cheerfully. Then he sped his tale to its close.

"It was charming, Mr. Bathurst, on my word of honour as a man of the world. Liu Chin was convinced. The young rascal was particularly happy in his faint recollections of Ngan-lo-foo and his removal somewhere in a boat. He was installed as the long-lost son there and then. *En passant*, I may say that I accept, entirely *pro forma*, a sum of money from the gentleman annually to this day. He enjoys Liu Chin's estate and it is the least I can do to blackmail him—for a charity, of course.

"Ah, but the cream remains, Mr. Bathurst, and there is just time for it, as I hear my servants outside. Liu Chin fulfilled his part of the contract with complete good faith and amiability. That is to say, he told me the subject of the thesis with which the Emperor had decided to perplex us. It was this, *The cuckoo in the budding spring-time cries 'I come! I come!'* Bless my soul, how well one does remember some trifles! I crammed hard for that thesis and must have done pretty well, for I came out Pang Yuen, Second Wrangler, you know. On the whole, it suited my convenience to miss the highest honours of all. I had no particular desire to be retained in Peking for Imperial or other purposes. I bore my triumph with great serenity, from all accounts; and then steamed south from Tientsin just as

fast as I could go. And a month later I was established in Singapore, for somehow I preferred to leave all my Chinese affairs in the hands of agents—Europeans."

Chan Sen rose affably, and extended his hand. Then he tossed his head back, opening his mouth so wide that I could see all his well-preserved teeth, and chuckled. "Gracious me, Mr. Bathurst, I *must* be getting old," he exclaimed. "I'm forgetting the tail-end of the story. As soon as Liu Chin had given me the subject of the thesis, I arranged for the purchase of every ticket in the lotteries in three provinces containing my poor unmentionable name. I came south twice as rich as before and—Pang Yuen. A certain amount of squaring in high places was necessary, but the intellect of a Pang Yuen was quite equal to that task. And now I wish

your obliging goodness farewell, Mr. Bathurst. Sleep sweetly."

The old fellow departed with some abruptness and abundant smiles, leaving me to digest his yarn as best I could. Nor did I find that difficult until my friend returned. I regarded it as very light food indeed. As such I passed on the outline of the story by and by to my host. Then I was astounded.

"My dear boy," said he, in comment on it, "it's true, every word of it, and Chan Sen doesn't mind a rush who knows it. I forget the year, but you'll find his rascally old name in the honour-list all right. But it is all a long time ago."

"And is China like that?" I asked, in amazement.

"It's very good essence of China, to this day," said he.

OTHELLO ON THE STAGE.

AMONG all the characters in the acted plays of Shakespeare there are very few that require for their adequate representation so rare a combination of qualities in the actor as does Othello. To an imposing presence (which, as the records of Edmund Kean's performance show, is not the same thing as imposing stature,) must be joined not grandeur of manner merely and outward dignity, but the power of expressing that nobility of soul which is implicit in every line of the text but is so difficult to reproduce satisfactorily upon the stage. It is the absence of this quality that has made the really great Othellos of stage history so few, in spite of the obvious scope for the tragedian's art which the character affords. It is not a part in which a certain measure of success can be attained by dint of manner and trick, as, for instance, is Richard the Third. As "Gloster" every inferior hack can find some scenes which are within his range, and so makes his "points," and has his "moments." Nor does the part play itself as to some extent Hamlet does. In Hamlet, it is said, no actor ever completely failed, because the words and actions must of themselves produce some amount of effect apart from any question of inspiration in the interpreter. With Othello this is not so. The action of the play is so sublime and at the same time so severely simple that, unless it is informed and sustained by the lofty genius of the principal player, it can produce no effect at all. Either it must live and move upon the topmost heights of pity and terror

or it must fail utterly. It is made up of the simple elemental passions, "love strong as death and jealousy cruel as the grave." And no actor's graces or stage tricks will avail to fill the swelling outlines if the massiveness of soul be absent by which and through which alone these passions can be adequately portrayed. "For he was great of heart."

And there is another reason for the comparative infrequency of worthy representations of OTHELLO upon the stage. Never is it more true that "two stars keep not their motion in one sphere," than when the sphere is a theatre, at any rate when the stars are of the same sex. A single planet with a number of satellites has been the arrangement that has more usually found favour. And in OTHELLO there are two male parts of almost equal eminence. Occasionally Iago has been allowed to take his rightful place. But more commonly the Moor, like the Turk, has brooked no rival near the throne, and the play has suffered from the depression into a foil of one who should have faced the protagonist on equal terms. "You are the best Iago I have ever played with," said Kean on one occasion to an actor much his inferior in reputation. And observing that the compliment was received with less gratification than might be expected, he added, "Why do you smile?"

"Because I have known five other Iagos to whom you have said the same thing," was the reply. The anecdote is instructive as showing the greatest of all Othellos going

about the country and accepting with indifference the Iagos that were supplied him as he might accept the scenery and stage arrangements of the provincial theatres.

Richard Burbage, one of the greatest names in English theatrical history, set the fashion which, with some eminent exceptions, has been followed ever since, of treating Othello as the leading part in the tragedy. The unknown writer of the elegy upon him includes it as follows in the enumeration of his characters.

But let me not forget one chiefest part
Wherein beyond the rest he moved the
heart,
The griev'd Moor made jealous by a
slave,
Who sent his wife to fill a timeless
grave.

These lines are of doubtful authenticity. But we know enough of Burbage's tragic power and the force and animation of his acting to believe that the early popularity of OTHELLO upon the stage was in great part due to him. This popularity was maintained during the period of the Restoration, a restoration of the theatre as well as of monarchical government, and both in a debased form. In spite, however, of the prominence at this time of comedies of contemporary life and manners, many of Shakespeare's plays still held the stage. And among those that were fortunate enough to escape the attentions of the "improver" of the type of Davenant was OTHELLO. This epoch of stage history is the reign of Betterton, as the former was the reign of Burbage. And in Othello Betterton found one of his most admired parts. For into it, as into his Hotspur and his Brutus, he was able to throw the generous ardour and nobility which characterised all his tragic acting, and were especially needful in this

case. Steele writing of him in the TATLER says,

The wonderful agony which he appeared in when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in OTHELLO; the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind, upon the innocent answers Desdemona makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and perfectly convince him that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers, jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene will find that he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakespeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent and broken sentences; but a reader that has seen Betterton act it observes there could not be a word added, that longer speeches had been unnatural, nay impossible, in Othello's circumstances.

Pepys considered Betterton "the best actor in the world," but does not appear to have seen him in OTHELLO, which indeed seemed to him "a mean thing." He once saw an actor named Burt in the part, but does not trouble himself to set down a word of criticism on his performance, though he is quick to note "By the same token a very pretty lady that sat by me called out to see Desdemona smothered." By the same token, to borrow Mr. Pepys's phrase, Desdemona was the first part to be acted by a woman on the English stage. The change was made just after the Restoration, and a prologue written for the occasion gives the reason for it thus:

Our women are defective, and so sized
You'd think they were some of the
guard disguised:
For, to speak truth, men act, that are
between,
Forty and fifty, wench of fifteen;
With bone so large, and nerve so in-
compliant,
When you call Desdemona, enter Giant.

After the time of Betterton no memorable Othello arose for a hun-

dred years, a fact which only becomes remarkable when we remember that those hundred years include the whole life of David Garrick. But the greatest of English actors failed to make much impression in this, one of the greatest acting parts in English dramatic literature. In the first place he was always greater in comedy than in tragedy. And secondly his tragic successes, Hamlet, Richard, Lear, were due rather to the wonderful variety and flexibility of his art, to his moments of frenzied passion and his power of inspiring awe and terror, than to any capacity for sustained sublimity or grandeur. And so, after Barry came to the front, Garrick, who with all his vanity was shrewd enough in recognising his own limitations, never played Othello again. For he knew that in this part he could not compete with the stately presence and silver voice of his rival, any more than the fiery impetuosity of his Romeo could hold its own against Barry's melting seductiveness. And Barry was one of those actors who are called great in their own day but not afterwards.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century John Kemble acted Othello with success. But when we reach Kemble we are on the threshold of the career of Kean, before whose coming, as Leigh Hunt said, Kemble faded like a tragedy ghost. So we cannot stop to say more of the elder actor than that his Othello was cold and stately, that it had a certain shadowy greatness, but lacked altogether the human feeling and fire of his conqueror. Great as he was in Shylock and Richard, Othello may be taken to have been Edmund Kean's greatest part and the most typical both of the excellences and shortcomings of his genius. "Othello," says G. H. Lewes, "which is the most trying of all Shakespeare's parts, was Kean's masterpiece." The great-

ness of his art rose to the greatness of the demands made upon it. A passage in which the same critic examines the impersonation in detail will show how this single character illustrates Kean's art as a whole.

Kean's range of expression, as already hinted, was very limited. His physical aptitudes were such as confined him to the strictly tragic passions, and for these he was magnificently endowed. Small and insignificant in figure, he could at times become impressively commanding by the lion-like power and grace of his bearing. I remember the last time I saw him play Othello, how puny he appeared beside Macready, until, in the third act when roused by Iago's taunts and insinuations he moved towards him with a gouty hobble, seized him by the throat, and in a well-known explosion, "Villain! be sure you prove," etc., seemed to swell into a stature which made Macready appear small. . . . It was, one must confess, a patchy performance considered as a whole; some parts were miserably tricky, others misconceived, others gabbled over in haste to reach the "points"; but it was irradiated with such flashes that I would again risk broken ribs for the chance of a good place in the pit to see anything like it. . . . From the third act onwards all was wrought out with a mastery over the resources of expression such as has been seldom approached. In the successive unfolding of these great scenes he represented with incomparable effect the lion-like fury, the deep and haggard pathos, the forlorn sense of desolation alternating with gusts of stormy cries for vengeance, the misgivings and sudden reassurances, the calm and deadly resolution of one not easily moved, but who, being moved, was stirred to the very depths.

These words were written by Lewes near the end of his life looking back on the triumphs of an actor who had been dead forty years. In the year before Lewes's birth we find Hazlitt telling the same tale. "Mr. Kean's Othello is his best character and the highest effort of genius on the stage." And again:

He displayed the same excellences and the same defects as in his former char-

acters. [There was not] throughout, that noble tide of deep and sustained passion, impetuous and majestic, that "flows on to the Propontic, and knows no ebb," which raises our admiration and pity of the lofty-minded Moor. There were, however, repeated bursts of feeling and energy which we have never seen surpassed. The whole of the latter part of the third act was a masterpiece of profound pathos and exquisite conception and its effect on the house was electrical.

One of the keenest criticisms ever passed on this actor is that attributed to Byron, that "to see him act was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning," so wonderfully would his genius light up a whole play from time to time in the midst of passages of dulness. So then in despite of all his characteristic irregularities and capricious lapses from taste Kean's Othello bears out what has been claimed for it; it was great because of the lofty nobility of soul that underlay and sustained his conception of it.

Appropriately enough his last appearance on the stage was made in this character, and under circumstances that suited well with his wild and picturesque career. On March 25th, 1833, he was announced to play Othello to the Iago of his son Charles. Worn out as he was by dissipation and a life lived at continual high pressure he could only keep up his sinking strength by doses of hot brandy and water. At first all went well. His acting was as noble as ever, the audience enthusiastic. "Mind you keep near me," he whispered to his son as they began the third act.

His determination [says an eye-witness,] seemed more than a match for his weakness; and as Iago distilled the first drops of poison into his ear, the force, beauty, and truth of his acting exhibited the evidence of the unfading

charm within. [But the exertion was too great,] and as he endeavoured to abandon himself to the overwhelming storm of passion . . . a marked change came over the tragedian; he trembled—stopped—tottered—reeled; Charles, fearing the worst, went forward and extended his arms; the father made another effort and advanced towards his son with "Villain, be sure," but it was of no use, and with a whispered moan "I am dying, speak to them for me," he sank insensible into Charles' arms.

A few weeks later he died, leaving Macready undisputed master of the English stage. But Macready, great actor as he was, was never the man to rival his greater predecessor as Othello. The broad elemental passions, to quote Lewes once more, of the ideal characters of tragedy, were altogether outside his range.

The anguish of a weak, timid, prostrate mind he can represent with a sorrowing pathos as great as Kean in the heroic agony of Othello; and in all the touching domesticities of tragedy he is unrivalled. But he fails in the characters which demand impassioned grandeur and a certain *largo* of execution. His Macbeth and Othello have fine touches but they are essentially unheroic, their passion is fretful and irritable instead of being broad, vehement, overwhelming.

Let us now turn to the Iagos of stage history. It is obvious at once that the interest of the most important scenes, from the point of view of the theatre, lies in the contest between these two characters, a contest, that is, between soul and brain; the noble, impulsive giant-soul of the one man fighting blindly against the keen tormenting intellect of the other. But the tendency, already noted, to reduce Iago from an antagonist to a foil has not infrequently detracted from the effect of this situation, so that the representatives of Iago have received comparatively little notice from the chroniclers of the

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stage. Davies in his MISCELLANIES OF ACTING tells us that Colley Cibber acted Iago "in a style so drawling and hypocritical, and wore the mask of honesty so loosely that Othello, who is not drawn a fool, must have seen the villain through his thin disguises." He adds that Macklin, more famous as the restorer of Shakespeare's Shylock, was in 1744 the only proper Iago that had been seen for a century. But we must pass over more than another century before we come to an Iago over whom we need linger. In 1881 the leading English and American actors of the day, Henry Irving and Edwin Booth, appeared at the Lyceum in a magnificent revival of OTHELLO in which they alternated the leading parts. Each excelled in Iago, for each possessed the qualities which make up an intellectual actor rather than the robust characteristics, whether of physique or of temperament, that are requisite for the Moor. Of Irving Mr. William Archer wrote: "In proportion as a character addresses itself to the intellect rather than the sympathy of the audience in precisely the same proportion does Mr. Irving succeed in it. . . . His Iago, who speaks from the brain, comes as near perfection as anything he has done."

The criticism would apply almost equally well to the cold keenly-polished performance of Booth. The American actor has himself left us an interesting analysis of the character as he sees it.

To portray Iago properly you must seem to be what all the characters think you are, not what the spectators know you to be; try to win even them by your sincerity. Don't *act* the villain, don't *look* it, or *speak* it (by scowling and growling all the time I mean), but *think* it all the time. Be genial, sometimes jovial, always gentlemanly. Quick in motion as in thought; lithe and sinuous as a snake. A certain bluntness (which my temperament does not afford) should be added to preserve the military flavour of the character. In this particular I fail utterly, my Iago lacks the soldierly quality. My consolation is that we know him more as a courtier than a soldier.

It is a very significant fact that these two impersonations of Iago, the most notable in the history of the character, have been the work of modern actors; that, whereas the leading tragedians of the past have striven to portray the massive force of Othello, the modern school, which prefers "character acting" to tragedy, has been attracted rather by the delicate subtlety of Iago. Robust declamation, the full outlines and the majestic style of former times have now given way to the colder triumphs of the analytical intellect, and polished keenness of style. If the tendency to dethrone Othello and exalt Iago is to be checked, this will be done by an actor who is able to apply his intellect, as distinct from his power of indicating the passions, to expressing the sublime simplicity of "the noble Moor."

GORDON CROSSE.

THE BRITISH AT THE GATES OF BERLIN.

"THE British,"—British soldiers, that is, bent on war—"at the gates of Berlin!"

One feels inclined to rub one's eyes in wonder at the suggestion that such a cry was ever really raised, in alarm, in the streets of the Prussian capital. Yet in truth it was, though as it happens, only once; and it struck dire terror into the hearts of the ancestors of those doughty warriors who in the present day affect to laugh at the idea of our having it in us to frighten anyone. No Roman trembled more timorously at the dread cry of *Hannibal ante portas*. "Not the great Lord Chatham himself, marching up with all his army would have created more profound alarm and apprehension:" so writes the German chronicler of the incident, the Rev. J. W. C. Cœsmar, Member of the Royal Consistory and one of the court-chaplains of his day—perhaps excusably enough for a foreigner, only two years after the famous Walcheren expedition, confusing the first earl of that name with his feeble eldest son. All Berlin went mad with fright. The Elector, George William (for there was no king then) was prudently keeping at a safe distance. His brother, deputed to take his place, was likewise studying his own security on the Moravian border. The High Chancellor, Herr Pruckmann, was helpless with despair. The people, perturbed and perplexed, gave vent to their dismay in such a witches' sabbath of noise, confusion, and drink, as nearly killed the infant heir to the throne by what,

the Chancellor suggests, must have been a special device of the devil, designed to bring his life to an end, and certainly prevented his mother, the Electress, still ill in childbed, from so much as closing an eye during the whole night of that great disturbance, thereby seriously retarding her recovery.

It is a curious little chapter in Prussian history to read, now that it is all over; and since all our historians (presumably for want of information, which is to be found only in the recesses of the secret State Archives of Berlin,) preserve a discreet silence upon the incident, its story may bear the telling.

The whole thing turned out to be a mere nightmare. The British, though described as veritable monsters, thirsting for blood and for booty, never intended the slightest harm nor actually inflicted so much as a scratch upon any Berliner. They were the corps (only some two or three thousand strong) which, with the consent of King James the First, Sir Andrew Gray had raised in England and Scotland to serve in the army of the King of One Winter, James's son-in-law, the Elector Palatine, Frederick the Fifth, fighting for the Protestant faith, and at the same time for his newly gotten crown of Bohemia. The royal consent was in truth all the assistance (besides the cold comfort of some only slightly sympathetic letters) which King James, on whose active support Frederick had securely counted, deigned to give in the crisis. Afford active help, even diplomatic only,

he would not. He would not even guarantee a loan of £100,000 which his son-in-law (kept out of money of his own by the King of France, to whom he had advanced it,) attempted to raise in the City. In fact poor Frederick, having been urged by all his powerful allies, in Germany and elsewhere, to accept the dangerous crown, now found himself left in the lurch; two of his fancied friends, indeed, so far from sacrificing themselves in his cause, managed to gain some valuable personal advantage out of his fall. The Elector of Saxony, who was professedly the foremost champion of Protestantism in Germany, not only held judiciously aloof, but was astute enough, behind Frederick's back, to sell his own benevolent neutrality to the Emperor, Frederick's foe, fighting for Roman Catholicism, in consideration of the transfer to him of the valuable Margravate of the two Lusatias. And Frederick's own brother-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg, who surely might have been relied upon to come to his aid, managed, by deserting his ally, to take his place as the acknowledged leader among Protestant Powers in Germany, which eventually led his house to the Imperial purple.

It was a very poor set off for all the promised support that King Frederick should in his hour of trial (that is to say, in the summer of 1620,) know that there were two or three thousand English and Scotch marching to his assistance, to help him, as it turned out, lose the battle of the White Mountain, which made him and his family (one of whom became our famous Prince Rupert) exiles from their home.

The British force, which so terribly frightened the people of Berlin, is described by different authorities in two entirely different ways. To

judge from King Frederick's letter to his father-in-law, which is preserved in our State Paper Office, one would say that they were a fine and well equipped corps, showily clad, in anticipation of Hanoverian tastes, in red and white, well conducted and efficient. German historians, on the other hand, will have it that they were the veriest rabble, recruited among the lowest dregs of the people, consisting mainly of gaol-birds—though there are said to have been about four hundred penniless adventurers of noble birth who joined them. By the same authorities these troops are reported to have been clothed for the most part in tatters and rags, to have been unsupplied with provisions, or cash, many of them even with arms, and the majority afflicted with some nameless, noisome, and contagious disease, which, so Cosmar suggests, may have been gaol-fever, but which, for want of a better diagnosis, the Germans called the pestilence, and which made them very formidable indeed to those with whom they were brought into contact. The men themselves are stated to have accounted for that disease by the exceptionally close packing to which they had had to submit on board ship, during a passage of unexpectedly long duration. At all events, when on June 30th, 1620, they arrived before Berlin, they required sixty waggons to transport their sick.

These disparaging statements, as well as others, which are really worse,—representing the men as given to drinking and stealing, to most disorderly conduct and an absolute want of discipline—are not by any means borne out by other testimony which, strangely enough, comes from the very same sources, in the main from Chancellor Pruckmann's despatches to his master. There we read that

Sir Andrew Gray administered very stern justice among them and carried about with him a number of men convicted of sundry offences, kept in irons with a view to execution by *strangulation*, which presumably means hanging. Also, that it required about three hundred waggons to convey their baggage and stuff. In addition to Sir Andrew himself, there are said to have been sixty officers, who ought to have been sufficient to maintain discipline. And, after all, in the decisive battle at the White Mountain, when, after so long a march and so protracted a campaign, certainly not favourable to discipline, the men should have been at their worst, they made a very decent fight of it, and held the fort of Karlstein, in which eventually they capitulated, for some time against the Imperialists.

However, Herr Omnes, as Chancellor Pruckmann in the language of his time rather disrespectfully styles the populace of Berlin, has never, to the present day, shown himself loth to accept loose and idle tales, more particularly such as happen to be pointed against us poor Britons; indeed, the more incredible and the more unfounded, the more readily does he appear to swallow them. Accordingly, when the alarming news arrived that the British corps, marching from Spandau, had actually been drawn up on the Tempelhof field outside Berlin, looking exceedingly fierce and bent upon robbery and bloodshed, the Berliners at once jumped to the conclusion that some modernised Hunnish host had come to torment them, and threw themselves incontinently into a state of the wildest panic. They suspected a raid, for which the war in Bohemia was being used only as a convenient pretext. And in truth they apprehended very much worse;

for their own conscience told them that they had not behaved altogether loyally by their sovereign, with whose express consent, so it was known, the British were then marching up to Berlin, having been carefully kept out of the two Mecklenburgs, which they were bound to pass, by a show of armed force. That sovereign had a just grievance against his subjects, and he might very conceivably, so they reasoned, have brought these foreign troops into his country for the purpose of exacting vengeance.

The disagreement had arisen over a question of religion. Although the German Protestants had at that time still great difficulty in holding their own against the Roman Catholics, yet, curiously enough, they had already fallen out very violently among themselves, to such a point indeed that a Brandenburg court-chaplain flatly declared from the pulpit that he would ten times rather ally himself with an avowed Papist than with a heretical Calvinist. People's minds had grown strangely heated over the controversy, and Lutherans and Calvinists bore themselves respectively as if they had been Jews and Samaritans. Brandenburg was, as it happened, wholly Lutheran; no country could be more so. It would have no baptism without formal exorcism, no sacrament without the profession of consubstantiation. However, its last Elector, John Sigismund,—who is fondly remembered as having added to the Hohenzollern possessions, by an unmistakeably Lutheran marriage, the two invaluable territories of Julich-Cleves and Prussia—though he had solemnly promised his dying father that, happen what might, he would never forsake his religion, yet had in 1614 openly declared himself a Calvinist, justifying his defection by the convenient maxim: "*In malis*

promissis rescinde fidem (you need not keep a promise you should never have made).” For full eight years the Elector’s wife (who was so staunch a Lutheran that she would subsequently not even attend her own grandson’s christening, celebrated according to Calvinist rites,) had managed to restrain him from at any rate openly avowing his apostasy. But the fatal step was now taken. John Sigismund had died a Calvinist, and his son George William had in his turn openly adhered to the reformed faith, thereby, as it proved, giving that tone to the religious belief of all his successors, which resulted in the curious blending of Lutheranism and Calvinism, which is still the main pillar of the established Prussian Church, and which makes that Church so easily manageable by the secular power. In the end, therefore, the sovereign’s secession from the Lutheran Church, which at once established a reign of toleration, made decidedly in favour of peace. But its first effect was to arouse very pronounced and general discontent, which showed itself in acts of unmistakeable significance. The late Elector’s court-chaplain, Herr Fuseselius, had had his house besieged by the populace and his windows broken. The present Elector’s Vicegerent, Margrave John George, left to govern the Electorate in his brother’s absence, among other demonstrations of hostility, had found himself mobbed, and stones were thrown at him with so much vigour and perseverance, that he was forced to take shelter in a private house. The Government having owned itself powerless to inflict punishment, the Margrave wisely withdrew himself to his distant possession of Jägerndorf, leaving the people of Brandenburg to the care of Chancellor Pruckmann. At the time when the British appeared before Berlin, people were openly discussing the advisability of repudiating

their sovereign altogether, and inviting the Elector of Saxony, an undoubted Lutheran, and then by far the more powerful prince of the two, to take possession of the country.

Here, evidently, so thought the people of Berlin, was the Elector’s answer to their provocation and challenge. It looked all the more as if it must be so, since it was currently reported that the invading force had for its chief no other than the outraged governor, Margrave John George.

With this construction put upon the arrival of the British, the capital was as a matter of course at once plunged into a state of violent perturbation; and not only the capital, but the surrounding country also, which was all more or less tainted with the same suspicion of treason, and which, in the early days of the Thirty Years’ War, understood well enough that armies on the march were not likely to prove over-considerate to the peasantry. All the villages within reach, so Chancellor Pruckmann reports to his chief, poured their awe-stricken inhabitants into the town. The people of Berlin themselves were in abject despair, completely losing their heads in view of the supposed peril. They appealed for help to the Government; they appealed no less pathetically to the Burgomaster and the Syndic. Both authorities, urged beyond what they felt able to resist, took such precautionary measures as they found to be in their power, but took them on lines so diametrically opposed to one another that the confusion was only increased. The prosecution of business was for the poor Berliners altogether out of the question; there was only one thing that they could bring themselves to think of, and that one thing oppressed them with unspeakable terror. The entire popula-

tion mustered in the streets, taking counsel, comparing notes, giving vent to its apprehensions in the open air. Whoever had a blunderbuss, or in fact any weapon, brought it out and, if it were a firearm, tried to charge it in such manner as in his confusion he could. The women gave themselves up to shrieking and wringing their hands. "I wish to goodness," wrote Pruckmann to the Elector, "the thing were well over and the foreigners far away out of sight." He despatched the only person whom he could discover capable of expressing himself in English, Herr von Bellin, into the British camp, to propitiate the invaders. The good man came back declaring that the British were perfectly orderly, well conducted, and inoffensive, intending no manner of harm, and thinking merely of the resumption of their march after a quiet night's rest in their camp; but his soothing message was by the terrified townsfolk accepted only as an intentional blind designed to lull them into false security. Drums and trumpets were brought out, to alarm the population, and a tremendous racket was raised. A scene of indescribable confusion ensued, which was kept up all through the night. Citizens and refugee peasants alike were summoned to service. All the gates except two, which were kept strongly guarded, were locked and barred. At the point supposed to be most directly threatened waggons were dragged together and a regular laager formed, such as our wars in South Africa have made us familiar with, though in truth the laager is a military formation of most respectable antiquity. Chancellor Pruckmann speaks of the hullabaloo as something defying description. There is no need to go outside his despatches for exciting incidents or sensational detail. What with fright, and drink, and ignorance

of the use of arms, people disported themselves like very maniacs.

There was nothing but drumming, and shouting, and firing and shrieking all through the night. Your Highness should have seen these doughty musketeers. One fired off his fuse, another his ramrod, the third his gun rest. The fourth could not make his blunderbuss to go off. The fifth, when firing, hid his nose fearfully in his sleeve, as we have heard that a few years ago monks, priests and Jesuits did in Paris. The muskets being discharged, people, being too full of liquor, did not know how to reload them.

Things reached their climax about three o'clock in the morning, when, in the midst of all this confusion and uproar, a new rumour got abroad that the British were actually approaching the gates. Every drum was rattled and every available instrument of music (among which there were a considerable number of bagpipes) sounded for all that it was worth. The Electress complained bitterly next morning of the acute pain that this had caused her. "Your Highness's unbaptised little heir," wrote Pruckmann, "was so terribly frightened that a serious calamity might have happened. And I verily believe that the Devil designed it." The poor child was, for reasons of economy, as we learn, and also because his father dreaded offending the potentates of one persuasion by asking those of another to stand sponsors, still unbaptised, though nearly five months old; and to die unbaptised would, as Herr Pruckmann hints, according to rigid Lutheran belief, have meant certain perdition.

Meanwhile the British, the innocent cause of all this alarm, were quietly keeping within their camp, resting as well as they could within earshot of such Babel of noises, and "in all probability," so Herr Cosmar conjectures, "quite as uneasy at all

this din and uproar, and as suspicious of some sinister design aimed against them, as were the Berliners themselves." Nothing whatever happened to justify the panic. In the morning the British rose, struck their camp, and resumed their march in an orderly way; and, since the Bohemian frontier was at that period, when the Lusatias still formed part of the Czech kingdom, scarcely forty-five miles distant from Berlin, a few days' march must have brought them well within their own chief's country. They were not destined to reap much credit on the battle-field. Among the armed hosts encamped in Bohemia they altogether failed to inspire that dread terror which had for a night thrown Berlin into a state of dismay; for on

November 8th they ingloriously capitulated, and nothing more was heard of them.

And so ended that reputed raid, which might have altered the course of history had the Devil really had his way, as Chancellor Pruckmann suggests, and succeeded in carrying off the unbaptised infant. The child, however, was reserved for a better fate. As the famous Great Elector, the friend and ally of our William the Third, he was destined to become the founder of a great dynasty, the creator of its present power, and the chosen model and favourite ancestor of the German Emperor William the Second.

HENRY W. WOLFF.

A MATTER OF DETAIL.

WHEN La Rosa grew suddenly blind all Paris wondered, except La Rosa herself, and everyone next inquired what Falmez would do. Falmez was a painter of pictures, military and otherwise, especially otherwise, since he had set up house with La Rosa who paid most of the expenses, having made a bold investment on some money derived from the judicious sale of her horses, carriages, and the Touraine estate which the Duke (who does not enter the story) presented to her.

Fate, however, elected to justify a somewhat musty proverb by its disappearance in the unexpected collapse of a company for the working of copper mines in Palestine, the Jewish syndicate having managed to ruin its thousands as effectually as if it had been composed of Bible-quoting Christians. This occurrence synchronising with her blindness, she was able to dismiss both episodes in an epigram, heroic if reprehensible, and Paris laughed.

Falmez, as usual, behaved like a most immoral person, and went on living with La Rosa, painting pictures which Paris, appreciating the situation, bought eagerly. La Rosa, who was flippant regarding her misfortunes, paid daily visits to a convent, *Les Sœurs Aveugles*, for the purpose of taking lessons in blindness, as she phrased it, devoting herself to the works of one Monsieur Brailles, and entertaining her friends with little character sketches of the *vie religieuse*. As hypocrisy is not an integral part of the Catholic faith, the nuns omitted to point

the obvious moral, and keeping their pupil's shortcomings on the *punctum cæcum* of their consciousness, contented themselves with praying that God, Who had for her closed one avenue of sense, would compensate by that internal light which never fell on land or sea, though nothing came of it save the somewhat inappropriate gift of an altar-piece, dubbed pious by Falmez, which did not inspire the sisters with any particular regret for the affliction of their charges.

How long the situation would have endured I cannot pretend to say, if Circumstance, with an eye to its possibilities, had not intervened. So, one fine morning as Falmez was endeavouring to grasp the value of almond blossoms embowering a sumptuous nudity designed to trumpet forth the virtues of a certain paste, he was aroused by the entry of the maid with a card.

"Did I not say a thousand times, Justine, that no one was to interrupt me while at work?" cried the great artist with all the fervour of a Michael Angelo annoyed by a criticising cardinal's ill-timed visit. "Madame receives all callers."

"But Madame is at the convent," expostulated Justine.

"Then let them come at two o'clock," answered the painter, going back to the Lady of the Almonds.

"But, Monsieur," persisted the Bretonne, her kind brave eyes shining, "it is a very young lady, very tired, who has come a long way, and is," she paused, and added "weary."

The intonation interested Falmez ;

he looked across the studio, observing the effect of the transparent muslin cap against the clear, olive tints. He determined to paint her as Jeanne d'Arc—the convent could have it if the Salon would not; he was beginning to appreciate the clerical connection. She made one of those gestures with hands, eyes and head that demonstrate the superfluity of speech. Falmez nodded, and reached for the card. She hastened forward, and gave it to him; his face darkened over it. "Mademoiselle de Verteuil," he read. "*Grand Dieu!*" which was not speaking by the card.

"What sort is she?" asked the artist after a pause.

"Tall and pale, Monsieur, with dark eyes. She would be a fine girl if— I told her that you would not be disturbed, but she said she thought you might accord an interview on seeing her name and knowing she came from Angoulême too. She has drawings she wishes to show you. She is an artist also!"

Falmez glanced at the indiscreet almonds on the canvas, and at some other indiscretions on the wall, shrugging his shoulders. "*Faites-la monter,*" he said at length, "and as I feel hungry, you may bring lunch earlier than usual."

The maid disappeared; Falmez looked up at the northern window with its gleam of white-flecked sky, and travelled back to the banks of the Charente by a route unknown to guide books. Presently he stopped at a pretty country house, ringed by apple-blossom, and ascended its terrace steps whence he surveyed the five years which had elapsed since he last dejectedly descended them. At that time he would have been counted a millionaire if illusions were a negotiable security. It was the season when the first almonds flowered,

and he had been indiscreet enough to propose marriage with Mademoiselle de Verteuil on the strength of a prize in chalks. He was presented by her mother with a study in oils, for that lady, while effusively sensible of the intended honour, had nevertheless impressed upon him a lurking absurdity of design which had eluded his attention; his strong point had never been detail.

Next day Marguerite de Verteuil had gone back to the convent at Orleans, and he to the University of Life, kept by one Dame Paris. He told himself he hoped she would not stay long; he wondered, half timidly, what she would be like, and as the thought shaped Mademoiselle entered.

The pantomimic part of Justine's description struck him first, she was more than "weary." The frayed hem of her gown, the shabby gloves, the shabbier shoes said the rest. She carried half shyly a portfolio under one arm, and extended her hand in a greeting eloquent of a diffidence not traceable to conventual influences. By grace of a good heart and the artistic intuition, Falmez understood, a comprehension not apparent as he handed her a chair into which she sank without the faintest attempt to disguise physical weakness.

They talked, she told him as much as a suddenly revived pride would allow, and he read most accurately between the lines, noting with something of relief that she had been in Paris only a week. Then she alluded to her drawings, touching the portfolio with a despairing glance at the bold splendours of the practised hand set round the room. The manner of Falmez was instinct with respectful eagerness, and as he reached for the sketches he trusted that she would have time to wait while he looked them over. He did not expect masterpieces — Oh, no! One did

not become a Kauffman or a Bonheur all in a day! She told him truthfully that she feared she was taking up *his* time. He assured her that in spite of appearances, he was not busy—quite the contrary. As she had been so amiable, he had another favour to beg; he was just about to lunch—would she forego any other engagement, and consent to take something with him? He was not a Lucullus but still—

"Willingly, Monsieur," she replied, laughing for the first time, "I should find myself very much out of place in the Hall of Apollo." And amid their mingled laughter Justine appeared bearing a generous collation.

He played the host in the same vein, eating with great relish and chatting of the days when he had dined off a hunch of brown bread in the adjacent Bois. Presently he took the drawings to the light to examine them better, leaving his guest at the table. After a decent interval they talked again, and Falmez almost did violence to his conscience regarding the sketches, for be the tyro princess or peasant, no true artist will lie against the Light that is the gift of Art.

Interwoven with the conversation was the story of the girl's life, with, for her, its memories of death, losses and increasing poverty, and for him, the balm of southern nights, the glory of southern days. He talked eagerly, now that the barriers were down; again they wandered amid the woods beside the Charente, the river Great Henri counted the loveliest in France. Again they watched the slopes that once were cliffs, above the plains that once were sea, splendid with the flower of almond and cherry and exquisite apple-bloom succeeding each other in the brief, bright beauty of the impatient South. There were tears in his eyes and a suggestion of them in

her voice, so that he was not sorry when a light knock called him to the door. It was only Justine, a basket on her rounded arm, leaving the message that she was going to market.

On returning to the table he picked up a leaf which had unnoticed fluttered to the floor. It was undoubtedly the best sketch of the collection, a country house rising above its orchards, and backed by stately pines. "*Le Séjour*—your place," he muttered, delighted that he could honestly say he recognised it. She lowered her eyes; he knew she recollected that it was on the steps before that same house they had parted five years ago.

"But it is sold long since," she murmured; "we lived on the money a while after father's death." She looked round the studio. "The power to paint like that," she said, "seems to be, of all things, the direct gift of God!"

Falmez smiled. "The good God is somewhat difficult," he observed; "His gifts have a trick of requiring considerable nursing—if one is to realise on them. One may be pardoned sometimes for a little hesitation in determining where the compliment exactly lies."

However, he decided that the conception on the easel should have a robe, the lightest possible texture, but still a robe—a very faint peacock green would, he thought, harmonise with the almonds. He regretted that he had not included one in the original outfit, as she began to admire it. But there was not a trace of prudery in her inept criticism. He told her, honestly, that she would do much better, but that she must work, and began to plan out a programme of study. "I'll speak to Combière about you," he concluded, "he was my master. Everything depends upon the person who first teaches you to

unlearn. And you really wish to be an artist?"

"With all my heart!" she replied. "There is nothing grander under Heaven. Oh what must it be to grow blind, having once seen such things! Often I think of those verses:—

'Les jours sur lui passent sans luire
Sombre, il entend le monde obscur,
Et la vie invisible bruires
Comme un torrent derrière un mur.'

Falmez started; a light tap on the door panel underlined the words. He remembered La Rosa. With an apology, he left the girl, and on the landing outside encountered that lady.

The eloquence of her expression lost little through the sightlessness of the eyes. She lifted a hand warningly, and turning, began to descend the stairs to the reception room. He walked by her side, but did not take her elbow, as he had been accustomed to do. When they reached the little salon, she touched his hand lightly and laughed. "I guessed you had a visitor," she said, "and did not wish to disturb, as it was only you I wanted to speak to. There is great flexibility in that young girl's voice, but she is very weak. Undoubtedly, a lady."

Falmez knew her so little that he anticipated what he thought would be the next question. "She is a Mademoiselle de Verteuil from my province," he replied, "I knew her long ago; she wishes to become an artist."

"She would succeed," commented La Rosa; "she has sympathy, *mon ami*. It would be well, if you could guide her."

"I have been thinking of it," he replied, absently. He had been thinking of something else.

La Rosa nodded. "The thing arranges itself," she said. "She must

come and work with you here; you know there are some studios not quite as a young girl might wish them. I was just about to enter when she quoted those verses. I was amused, but it would have been a false note, eh *mon ami*? She would have been embarrassed. But it would have been an effect," she added, half regretfully.

"But no one would imagine that you were blind!" exclaimed Falmez. "Your eyes are like any others. And of course she must see you some time."

She leaned close to him, and, with a swift soft gesture, passed her hand over his face. He kissed the finger tips when they reached his lips, and put his arm round her. "*Petite*," he whispered, after a pause, "I have a favour to beg. Once before I touched upon it. You would not hear. Listen now, I pray. Will you marry me? We have been wedded this many a day, and in the husband thou shalt not lose the lover—that I swear! I shall see to the formalities at once. After all, it is only a matter of detail."

She did not answer. He looked into her face; its pathos touched him to the heart. He kissed her passionately. Still, she was silent. "I am thy debtor in much," he went on, admitting a fact which had given him some momentary twinges. "For me thou didst leave a rich lover. To me thou hast remained faithful as many wives are not. With me thou hast trodden flowery ways, wilt thou not companion me along the narrow path?"

"Years ago," she began, softly withdrawing herself, "there was an almond tree in our garden. One January it burst suddenly into flower and I rejoiced. But later, there came a frost, and all the blossoms withered in a night. My mother laughed when I wept, and told me that it is a foolish thing—the flower of indiscre-

tion. It is so with the hearts of women. My mother would say there was nothing we should pray for more earnestly than good sense."

"But one frost does not kill," he whispered, puzzled by her quiet tones, "I would rather wear above my heart the maimed bud I loved, than the brightest that ever hid beneath its sheath when the wind howled, and only came to the sunlight when all was peace."

She shook her head. "That flower would be better for thee," she said. "The flower which blossoms when God wills and does not seek its own way."

"Those nuns have made thee serious," he cried impatiently. "They will end by making thee like themselves."

She laughed. "I would wish nothing better!" she answered. "Listen, why dost thou ask me to marry thee now?"

"Because I love thee!" he replied.

"Perhaps, but oh, *mon ami*, there was another reason!" He was silent, thankful that she could not see the flush on his face.

"It was because thou didst wish to help yonder girl," she whispered, "and didst understand that otherwise she could not continue coming here with honour. That was thy main motive. It cost a little to make the sacrifice."

"A little!" he echoed. "Nothing!"

She smiled. "Let us put it down as a cypher in the Book of Love that we have read together," she rejoined. "Hast thou never heard that Time who keeps that book can make very great numbers out of such cyphers, and ere long thou wouldst repent. Answer me! Didst thou ever love her?"

"Ah," she resumed, "I read thy voice aright, and it makes what I

intend to do the easier. I thought of it often lately, but feared for thee. Now I fear nothing, thou wilt be happy again."

"What wilt thou do?" he muttered brokenly.

"The indiscreet flower will learn to bloom again," she murmured softly. "This day I join the *Sœurs Aveugles*. Nay, it is no living death—only the beginning of another life. For what people want is common sense. I came hither for the last time to tell thee of my determination. Wouldst thou hold me back? A year, two, three, of happiness, and then a sickness, an accident, and what could I do? A blind woman! The money would go and thou wouldst be dragged down to poverty. This knowledge would wring my heart, day and night, because I know thou wouldst never leave me. Nay," she went on, holding up a hand, "the car waits at the door. It is not far—only some streets, some thicknesses of brick and stone, and thou wilt always know where I am, and where I am happy."

A light foot-fall sounded on the stair, through the open door Falmez saw Mademoiselle de Verteuil pausing on the landing, the portfolio under her thin arm, a new look on her face.

"Come hither," said La Rosa in a voice that never was sweeter. "I fear that I have detained Monsieur Falmez, and he has much to say to you still."

The young girl entered, almost painfully embarrassed. She saw in La Rosa yet dressed for the street a great artist—she was right. "Monsieur has said much for which I am truly grateful," she replied, "but I know his time is occupied, and I wished to steal off."

La Rosa laughed, the girl echoed the laugh. Falmez turned to the window which gave on the Rond Point des Champs-Élysées, but he saw nothing of the glowing flowers, the

leaping fountains, the sparkling life below. A sudden, keen sense of the significance and the mystery of life touched the young girl. She glanced at La Rosa, question in her eyes. She looked at Falmes, he had not stirred; he stood by the window, his hands clenched.

"Come," said La Rosa brightly, "do you know that you did me a great service to-day?"

"In that I am happy," replied Mademoiselle de Verteuil, striving to forget her shabbiness and broken spirit in the presence of this graceful, confident woman "It is not often in the power of the poor to help anyone."

"No woman need ever be poor in goodness," said La Rosa simply. "As for the rest—it comes and goes. But, I have not introduced myself. I am, or shall be Sister Catherine, have you never read of Caterina la Bella? and I shall live at *Les Sœurs Aveugles*. When you are a great artist you must come and see me." She turned towards the window uncertainly, and stumbled against a chair. Falmes took a step forward, but paused, and bent his tortured face upon the street again.

"It is not so very terrible," said La Rosa in answer to the girl's exclamation, "one cannot see one's self growing old, and that is a comfort. Besides, after a short time, one gets to see with one's fingers, *comme ça*. Will you do me a favour, lady whom I shall never see until we all meet in a light that will not be taken away?"

"Madame—Sister!" cried Mademoiselle de Verteuil, "what can I do?"

"Show me to the door," whispered La Rosa.

Together they quitted the room, together they descended the stair the feet of one should never touch again,

and together they stood upon the threshold La Rosa should cross no more.

"Monsieur Falmes is very sad," said La Rosa, "he could not speak just now. Go to him, he needs comfort."

"I do not understand," said the girl, her pale face ennobled by unselfish sorrow.

"Do not try," answered La Rosa. "This is the step? So, thank you."

She was in the carriage now; Mademoiselle de Verteuil reached up her pinched mouth to that blind, strange face.

"There, there," said La Rosa, with unconquerable good humour, meeting her lips, "we shall all be crying soon! The poor horse as well, for being kept waiting! We have quite a talent for tears in youth—nothing but tragedy. And we kill all our characters, as if there were no other way of leaving the stage. There's no common sense in the world. Go and talk to him, he must not be left alone." The voice was imperious now, almost harsh.

"Oh, of what can I talk to him?" murmured the girl. "I, so ignorant! And this parting—"

"Can you not think of anything?" replied La Rosa, leaning back with a sad little laugh. "Well, tell him to speak to you about a matter of detail."

The car went on. The girl with a sudden decision of movement, turned and ascended the stairs. On the threshold of the reception room she paused, the tinkle of the fountains, the sunshine outside, taking her back to the Charente. Falmes had dropped into a chair, his face between his hands. At her step he raised his head, and they looked upon one another across the empty room.

WILLIAM BUCKLEY.

THE UNEARNED INCREMENT.

WITHIN the province of Economics at the present time, there are few topics, if any, which have caught the popular fancy to the same extent as the question of the Unearned Increment. Whether this has come about through its having been used extensively in the political strife of party, or through other causes, is immaterial; the fact remains. By some it is used like a magic word of which the real meaning is obscure, but which is supposed to possess some hidden power or significance; others speak as if by solving the problem of Unearned Increment (whatever that may mean) a panacea would be found for remedying the bulk of our social evils and anomalies. I propose here to inquire only what the nature of the subject really is, its extent and limitations, and its relationship to some of the departments of Political Economy. Clearly it is impossible to do more than touch the fringes of a matter which has been the subject of a Royal Commission and of the investigations of various important Committees, as well as of numerous treatises.

In passing, it is worth noticing the altered conditions and circumstances which make such an enquiry as this pertinent. In earlier times the question of Unearned Increment was of comparatively small moment; and even in so far as there was one, no suggestion of enquiry into it would have been compatible with the conditions of life and thought then existing. But the great and rapid strides which have been made in the progress of the nations of the world during even the past century have

wrought many changes. The Unearned Increment itself has in many forms so much increased, and plays so important a part in the present distribution of wealth, that it has forced itself into a conspicuousness which may mean its modification to a considerable extent. Many factors have contributed to make such a climax unavoidable; the revolution, for example, which has been caused in industry and commerce by invention and discovery in every department; the change through which, in consequence, the life of society has passed; and generally the high stage which modern civilisation has reached. Alongside of this, we must remember the acute struggle for very existence which so many now know, the barbarous life from hand to mouth under which the masses exist. These are the facts which compel men,—not only those who are in the thickest of the fight, but also all who would fain see absolute justice done to all—to endeavour to solve the present question.

Yet most noticeable of all is the atmosphere of thought which makes the discussion of the subject possible. Partly by the aforesaid facts of progress, partly by the diffusion of learning, and partly by the strong spirit of democracy which permeates civic life in our own and other countries, an openness and susceptibility of mind, a sort of expectant intelligence, have resulted, which favours enquiry into all the interests of social life. It may be that religion and the inculcation of the doctrine of human brotherhood, and the diffusion of socialistic ideas,

have also had their share. However it be, the whole spirit of the age and the growing acuteness of the question render the Unearned Increment a subject of congenial and necessary enquiry.

Let it be understood, however, that my present object is not to attempt to decide what the solution of the problem should be, but simply to trace in a general way how the Unearned Increment arises in various departments of social life. To discover what part of increment is earned and what unearned is a necessary preliminary to any discussion of the justice or injustice of taxation, and the manner of its incidence. These nice and intricate questions are too often tampered with unprofitably and even harmfully, before the bare facts of the case are appreciated in all their bearings.

Income is earned by the constant circulation of capital, and by the interchange of all kinds of property: "Exchange is the main source of wealth." In some cases, the return is equitable and exactly proportionate to the expenditure of capital or labour, while in other cases it is out of all proportion. Generally speaking it is this surplus value, this balance which accrues over and above the amount that is by the consent of all due, to which the name of Unearned Increment has been given. The term was first popularised by John Stuart Mill; it was given, as he himself admits, not from altogether dispassionate motives, and whether it is a fortunate name or the reverse remains to be seen.

It is necessary to recognise the conditions under which property is held, and also some of the classes of property in which we are to discover the operation of Unearned Increment. We do not live in a Golden Age of which some dream,—whether it is to the remote past we must look for

it, or to the even more hazy horizon of the future. In such an ideal age human beings are understood to live in common brotherhood and mutual respect for each other's rights and welfare; striving each for the weal of all, and sharing in willing equity the fruits of their labour no less readily than the bounties of Nature. The present time is nothing if not practical and matter-of-fact, and individual interests, private property, free exchange, and competition give the keynote of it. Each man endeavours to obtain possession of as much as he can, and has the widest power of disposal by gift or bequest. From this there result, as a matter of course, accumulations of wealth and inequality of fortunes. However beneficial it may be to socialise our present institutions, it may be taken that Communism is inapplicable to the society of men, as men are, and the question of Unearned Increment must be considered in the light of private property and free exchange being permanent conditions of our actual life.

With regard to the different forms of Property, there is of course the familiar fundamental classification into land and moveables. Land may be said to stand by itself. It has much in common with other things, but is vitally distinct. It is the gift of Nature to men, and is, in any fully occupied country, of limited extent. (The supply of moveable property may be increased indefinitely, but not so land.) It also varies in fertility and situation, and it is its scarcity that makes its value, whether with regard to particular areas, or taking land in general. But the industry and labour applied to it must also be taken into account. Were industry not thus inextricably bound up with land, there could be no answer to the contention so often

put forward by Socialists that the land is Nature's bounty to men, and should be equally shared and enjoyed. It is industry which imparts to land most of its valuable properties, has indeed reclaimed it in many cases so as to have any value at all. The naked land itself is comparatively valueless, until cleared, drained, and cultivated or built upon; until roads are made; or the soil is otherwise improved or utilised. It is this that justifies private property in land, which ownership, Mill says, can be morally maintained only in so far as the owner is the improver of the land. The crucial division thus made must be carefully noted, namely, the natural qualities of land which cannot be modified, and the labour and capital of varying amount which are applied to it. The important respects in which also land differs from moveables may easily be deduced from what has been said.

It is now necessary to consider particularly the different forms of return from the possession of land. The division of it into that used for agriculture, and that used for building, may be usefully kept in view. In feudal times, by way of return for the possession of land, homage was done, and military and other services in kind were rendered, but now with population so greatly increased and the social organism so elaborated, all such returns take the form of money. Land being in the possession of certain individuals by "an appropriated natural monopoly," rent is paid them for the use of the land. Competition regulates the amount of rent, but the landlord lets his land usually to the farmer who will pay him most for it. When, however, we come to make an analysis of rent, we find that it is not really everything paid for the use of land. As we have seen, land is limited, and

varies considerably in fertility and productiveness, and naturally more rent is obtained for the land of better quality. According to Ricardo, the rent of the more productive farm is determined by the pecuniary value of the excess of its productiveness over that of the worst land in cultivation which pays only a nominal rent. Economic rent is accordingly defined as "a permanent differential profit obtained by the owners of the lands of superior natural advantages." It is this "indestructible value," as Ricardo called it, which tends by competition to rise without any effort on the part of the landlord. It is urged that, in so far as he has expended capital on the land, and has improved it, as for example by drainage, he is entitled to a proper recompense, and it is that part alone of the rent obtained which can be said to be fairly earned. To whatever extent the rent exceeds this reasonable return, "the plus-value" as the French call it, in so far as there said to be Unearned Increment. This is the view taken by Mill and those of his school.

Land is a monopoly article both in regard to limitation and absence of competition, and it is necessarily everywhere in demand for all purposes. In certain cases, land is under fetters of entail, which, by preventing its coming into the market, increase the monopoly and ensure its possession by a limited series of heirs. By the middle of the seventeenth century the rent of land had increased twenty-fold beyond that in the Middle Ages. During the last hundred years the value of land has grown at a prodigious rate, although during the last twenty-eight or so a change has set in, and agricultural rents have greatly fallen. At present the land is held by a comparatively small class of society, which, in nearly all cases, is able, on account of the keenness of

competition, to obtain very high rents (the bulk of which is said to be unearned), and in whose hands wealth accumulates to a degree gravely detrimental to the best interests of society. This is affirmed by some to be a fruitful source of the depressions and over-burdening of agriculture. But much more acutely is it felt with regard to land in urban districts, upon which communities live. In most towns, and particularly in large cities where space is economised so much, tenants have to pay high rents for their houses. Those who attack the Unearned Increment here contend that the more prosperity a community enjoys, the more it must as a rule pay to its landlords, "who reap where they have not sowed, and gather where they have not strawed"; and Mill's statement is quoted: "They grow richer, as it were, in their sleep, without working, risking or economising." Consequently the landowners of any town have practically the shaping of its destinies in their hands, for the whole social life is often in a very real way affected; living becomes much too dear, trade and enterprise (railway undertakings, for instance) may be hampered, and overcrowding with its concomitants ensues.

What is known as *Feuing* in Scotland is the modern adaptation of the Feudal System. Suppose a person owns a piece of land in the vicinity of a growing community, and a demand arises for the land for building purposes. The owner may originally have paid a low price at agricultural rates for the land many years previously, but now in the changed circumstances the land has a value often from twenty to thirty times greater. The Superior, as he is called, then usually grants feus of the land in small portions to builders and others whom he charges annual feu-duties at

high rates (usually equal to about four per cent. on the capital value) for the use of the land. He may also stipulate for duplicands of the feu-duty at stated periods, and with regard to feus granted prior to 1874, casualties may be exigible on the entry of heirs or singular successors, or otherwise. Often speculative builders obtain feus of considerable portions on which they erect houses or tenements, which they either let at high rents, or sell outright on a scale which handsomely remunerates them for their outlay. The Superiority may be put on the market and realise as high a price as twenty-five years' purchase. Or where subinfeudation is prohibited, the land may be burdened with ground-annuities, without creating a new fee. Obviously then, high rents are primarily and directly due to the high feu-duties and other burdens which the Superior of the land built upon is able to impose through the demand for his land. But the demand exists, and so it may be said that it is demand which causes the high rents and high feu-duties. It is this increased value beyond the price originally paid for the land (plus a reasonable rate of interest on the sunk capital) which is labelled as unearned, and which is thought by many to be a fit subject for special taxation. While the Superior retains the land unfeued, under the present system of taxation he is liable only in an agricultural rate, which is nominal compared with what he must pay if taxed on the potential, market, or capital value of the land. Although the land is feued, no special tax is exigible on feu-duties, ground annuities and the like.

Such strong inducements for the acquisition of wealth without effort have led to considerable land speculation. Thus in America, where so much land remains still to be occupied, such speculation is much more exten-

sive than here. Land is withheld from use and kept, like wine, to improve in value. In this connection it is a pertinent enquiry to observe the most obvious causes which operate in producing the Unearned Increment. The main explanation is the proximity to towns, with all that that implies. With the increase of industry and commercial prosperity, the ramifications of the towns extend to the surrounding lands, and it becomes necessary to encroach upon them. The expenditure by municipalities upon improvements which enhance the amenity of certain localities, by streets, bridges, open spaces, public buildings, and so forth, or the enterprise of private individuals in the same way by suitable buildings in the neighbourhood,—are all benefits which society may be said to confer. Again on a larger scale, the continually increasing construction of railways, public works, harbours, and even canals, and the opening and working of mines, all contribute to the same end. In short, the Unearned Increment is largely the result of a previously dormant utility now being realised. This realisation, it is strenuously maintained by those who attack the system, is brought about directly by society and accordingly some return to society should be made for it by contribution to the rates.

Mines are of course included under the economic term land, although they differ in respect that they are under the earth and that their value is gone whenever the minerals are extracted, unlike the fertility of land. The minerals are usually owned by the proprietors of the lands under which they lie. This right of ownership has naturally been much assailed, and the royalties, which the owners exact from those who sink and work the mines upon the selling-price of the minerals extracted, are pointed to as

one of the most patent examples of Unearned Increment. Public House Property is also singled out for special notice, because it commands such monopoly values. When ordinary house property, say worth a few hundred pounds, has conferred upon it a licence to retail alcoholic liquors, the effect is to endow it with an increased value of several thousands of pounds. This monetary gift is also cited as a glaring example of Unearned Increment.

Let us turn now to the manner in which the Unearned Increment appears in other forms of property. Moveables, such as all kinds of commodities, articles of manufacture, ships, stocks, and shares, are all objects of private ownership, capable of being bought and sold for profit. When a manufacturer produces an article, he is on selling it entitled to receive at least the cost of the raw material, his expenses for coal, machinery, and wages, interest on his capital, and a reasonable return for his skill and labour; it is the same when a man buys cattle, feeds or grazes them, and sells them again. In any such cases, it is argued that, if and when through a rise in the market by increased demand a return is obtained in excess of the actual value or fair recompense, Unearned Increment enters. Thus, suppose a person has bought shares, which in the course of market fluctuation have risen to a price much beyond that paid for them, and a correspondingly high dividend is paid on the shares, such dividend is said to be unearned in so far as beyond the fair return on the capital invested; as Mill puts it, "a kind of income which constantly tends to increase without any exertion or sacrifice on the part of the owners." So also, in the event of a sale of the shares at this increased price, the excess balance may, it is said, pro-

perly be characterised as unearned. This is the idea and aim which of course permeates all commerce and industry. Whether it be pursued in a laudable hopefulness of sufficient reward, or in the questionable spirit of gambling, Increment is the end in view.

Professor Marshall in his *ECONOMICS OF INDUSTRY* speaks of the "producer's surplus" of total receipts over prime (money) cost, as "quasi-rents." Citing an illustration from mackerel-fishing, he says: "If we suppose the boat to be owned by a capitalist undertaker who pays the fisherman by the day, the net earnings of his boat for the day will be the excess of the price he gets for his fish over his outlay for wages and stores, together with allowance for the injury done to the boat and net by the day's work." Although at first sight in all such profit-making there appears to be a substantial part unearned, yet on examination its limitations and imposts are evident. We contrast in passing the effect which competition has upon such profits, compared with agricultural rents. In the latter case competition forces up rent, while in other cases, in manufactures, for example, exceptional profits tend to disappear through competition. These quasi-rents are "determined by the more or less accidental relations of demand and supply for the time." To quote again from Marshall: "The net income (or surplus, or quasi rent) yielded by a successful business, looked at from the point of view of the undertaker himself is the aggregate of the net incomes yielded firstly, by his own ability, secondly, by his plant and other material, and thirdly, by his business organisation and connection. But really, it is more than the sum of these. For his efficiency depends partly on his being in that particular

business, and if he were to sell it at a fair price and then engage himself in another business his income would probably be much diminished." Marshall thus indicates the elements affecting these quasi-rents which, even if unearned, should prevent their being either taxed by the State, or altogether confiscated and distributed for the good of society, as the Collectivists propose. Besides the detrimental effect of competition upon returns in the future for which due provision should be made, it must be remembered that the average returns must be calculated over a relatively long period. And in order to attract capital into the particular industry, this average must always be more than normal supply price.

Considering the subject now from the point of view of labour what do we find? The present system invests certain individuals with the instruments of production and the necessary capital by which they become the employers of labour. The worker in order to subsist is obliged to give his labour in return for certain wages. The rates of wages vary in different employments, but all have this common element that they do not usually represent the full value of the produce of the labour. It is at this point we come into close contact with the Socialists. While in their bitterness against the moneyed unproductive classes they affirm the rule "that if any would not work neither should he eat," they also declare that even if he does work, he shall enjoy no more than he can be proved to have earned. They further maintain on the positive side, as their first principle, the right of labour to the whole produce of labour. Dr. A. Schäffle in his *QUINTESSENCE OF SOCIALISM* summarises the views of Karl Marx, "the most authoritative leader and thinker of the Proletariat," on this matter.

Speaking of the wage-earner he says : "The surplus of his day's labour over the wages he receives must fall to the share of capital and enrich its possessor, partly supporting his luxurious household, partly (and in a greater measure) furnishing his endless accumulations of capital. So there goes on, under the mask of a wage-system, the daily and hourly exploitation of the wage-earners, and capital becomes a vampire, a money-grubber and a thief." Following upon this onslaught, he states the alternative proposals which, for completeness, it is well also to quote : "The whole produce of the nation will be divided among all, in proportion to the work done by each ; profits will no longer encroach upon wages, as there will no longer be wages and profits, but only payment by the community of a publicly assigned income, uniformly arising from labour and proportioned to its quantity and social utility."

No lengthy criticism of these contentions is necessary here. But it is sufficiently clear what it is that Labour puts its finger upon and stigmatises as Unearned Increment, the balance, to wit, of the profits after deduction of such wages as are sufficient only to provide for the labourer's necessities of life. But such a proposition cannot be maintained, and, as we shall see, there are many other deductions which necessarily fall to be made from the total receipts, thereby diminishing, if not eliminating, the Unearned Increment. Of course the first charges are the whole expenses connected with the manufacture or trade, such as for coal, machinery, raw material, repairs and insurance, losses and bad debts. The capitalist is in equity entitled to a return at a fair rate of interest on the capital sunk whether in erecting the works and machinery, or in carry-

ing on the business. In addition, adequate remuneration is due to him for devoting his own time and skill at a rate equivalent to that necessary to meet the salary of a deputy. Nor is this all, for the employer of labour must take bad years with good, and, as has been already shown, the average must be well above the normal ; to give stability to his business there must be a steady building up of a reserve fund, and a certain amount must be set aside to be used as further circulating capital, to extend the business and so support a larger band of workers. Or capital saved from exceptional profits may be devoted to other industries, and so react favourably upon other departments of labour. But still, it probably cannot be denied that in profits, as in wages, there is a considerable unearned element.

Having indicated some of the ways in which the Unearned Increment which is alleged to be appropriated from the labourer is really earned, consider how impossible is the claim of labour on the positive side to a due share in the Unearned Increment. The bulk of modern industry centres in manufactures on a large scale, and division of labour operates to the fullest extent. How different is it from former methods where the artisan procured the material and began and finished each article of his trade. But under present conditions, where every article of production is the work of many different hands, or as it has been graphically put, where it takes "nine (or even more) men to make a pin," it is manifestly impossible to decide with any exactness how much each has contributed to the complex result, and what each individual has earned. One labourer is dependent upon another, and there is practically no such thing now as an isolated unit in labour. Nor is every member

of the labouring class employed ; some are too old, others are too infirm, others are minors ; and even those presently engaged in labour will become unfit sooner or later. For all such cases adequate provision must be made, and it is to unearned or surplus income that they must look for satisfaction of their wants. Foxwell puts it well : " No one in a modern society can possibly say what the produce of an individual's labour really is. We know what the law allows him to acquire ; we cannot say what he has equitably 'earned.' Social obligation is involved in every acquisition ; at every moment he depends on tradition from his ancestors, on co-operation from his contemporaries, and even on expectation from his successors." In connection with the demands of labour upon capital, it is also necessary to take into account the offices of Trade Unions in adjusting towards greater equilibrium the balance between parties. Their effect is often substantially to increase the return to labour, and to cause a corresponding decrease in the Unearned Increment accruing to capital.

Let us consider next what place Unearned Increment has in other things, as for example in immaterial capital. Material capital certainly accumulates, though not in the way or to the extent generally supposed, for it is continually being transformed, circulated, and utilised, and within a decade the bulk of the capital of a country is completely renewed. But immaterial capital in the form of skill is accumulated permanently to a very much greater extent. If we grant the proof of the epigram, that "all knowledge is borrowed," we must also see how much of the skill, scientific enlightenment, and dexterity we to-day command as the heritage from former representatives of our race. With the minimum of exception, we

may say that all such skill is unearned, and what a fund of Unearned Increment it is ! If Unearned Increment is to be taxed or confiscated, is this form of it to be taken from us along with other forms ? Is each man to begin his life's work on the level of his savage ancestor, and develop within the compass of a few years up to the present standard those faculties which are the result of almost endless progressions of the race ? If a man could do that, he might, as regards his skill at least, be then said to earn its fruits. Is a boat-builder to scorn the improved methods now known, and hew his boats at first out of the trunk of a tree as if he lived in the Stone Age ? Is a miller to grind corn between stones at first, till he arrives through successive improvements at the present process ? But more need not be said, for it is sufficiently clear not only how much we trade upon the wealth and the land of our forebears, but also how little skill or invention we have, which is not, like our very lives, a direct legacy from them.

As to the growth of Unearned Increment in general, whether in rent, profits, or wages, what are the ultimate considerations which shall determine in how far it is actually unearned ? In every case it is to the consumer that we must look in all social arrangements. The question may be considered as one of supply and demand. Whether it be a piece of land, or some commodity, what is it that forces up its value but the demand which society makes for it ? Increment could never accrue from land in an unoccupied country or district, for no one would want it ; and it is because land in towns is so scarce that the demand for it is great, and thus automatically this demand fixes its own price. Similarly if a person were to produce an article which no

one had any use for, no matter how good in itself, it could have no market value. Accordingly it is clear that, to lower the price, the only way is to lessen the demand or to increase the supply. The equilibrium between demand and supply must be carefully maintained.

In this way there might be said to be a monopoly in everything, not only in land. It is the demand that creates scarcity, and if no wants had to be met, there would be no monopoly. On the earth's surface there is no doubt land sufficient for all, but it is the unequal demand that is made for it in particular areas that makes it the subject of monopoly. This scarcity value may however be lessened, if by better means of transport access is more easily obtained to and from these particular areas.

An important aspect of the matter is discovered if the supplying of land or commodities be regarded as a real service performed by the owners for the benefit of society. If in a thickly populated locality some one throws open his ground for building purposes and gets a large return therefor, it may be said that the very fact that he can command such a return, shows that it is a positive advantage which he is conferring upon society in providing the ground,—which it might not be unfair to estimate in money at the surplus over agricultural value, that is to say, at the Unearned Increment. According to this view the owner of mines, or the manufacturer of any sort of commodity, may be said to do something for which he ought to be paid, in being able and willing to exchange his possessions, and thus to satisfy the needs of Society with regard to the various articles supplied. If these considerations deserve weight, and the argument be sound, they show how the Unearned Increment can be partially, if not

wholly, accounted for in many departments of life. At least, they will make any one chary of proposing taxation or confiscation of such Increment without first ascertaining what proportions are duly earned and what are unearned.

Accordingly much that one hears about such taxation must be considerably discounted. Usually it is those who have themselves little or nothing to tax that most energetically propose taxation. It is suggested that land should be taxed on its capital value, as the present land-tax is of such old standing, and is so small, that in many cases it is purely nominal. Mill proposes as a first step that a careful valuation should be made for the purpose. Whatever tax is imposed must never be above the economic rent,—that is the limit—otherwise land would go out of cultivation. But Henry George actually proposed not merely a tax upon rent but the handing over of all rents to the State, leaving the land-owners practically in the position of only land-stewards or land-agents. It is proposed also to tax feu-duties and ground annuals. "Ground rents," says Adam Smith, "and the ordinary rent of land are therefore perhaps the species of revenue which can best bear to have a peculiar tax imposed upon them. Ground rents seem, in this respect, a more proper subject of peculiar taxation than even the ordinary rent of land." Such taxation might be effective as regards those feu-duties already constituted, but as regards the future it is probable that the Superiors would merely raise these burdens so as to meet the tax and ultimately rents would go up. This would be the effect in places where maximum feu-duties and rents were not being charged before the imposition of the tax; but probably it might partly fall on the parties intended,

where this maximum was already reached. But it is further objected to such taxation of feu-duties, that it would be over-taxing heritable property, for at present taxes are exigible from both the tenant and the proprietor. To show what further elements are involved, it is only necessary to hint at the grave disturbance to investments in feu-duties which taxation would cause. The incidence and equality of any taxation of Unearned Increment connected with land must be, it is evident, a most delicate operation.

As regards other forms of Unearned Increment, taxation is proposed, for example, on new Joint Stock Companies, upon which an income-tax might be levied on the profits when they rise above a certain margin, in addition to personal income-tax. Also when the shares reach a certain premium, there should be conceded to the employees or the public a right of purchase of a certain number to be drawn by lot. It is worthy of notice that already an important step has been taken in the direction of taxation of Unearned Increment in the imposition of heavy death-duties, which are now such a fruitful source of revenue. But the general effects upon society of any taxation of Unearned Income must also be carefully kept in view. The mainspring of most men's striving after wealth is to obtain sufficient ade-

quately to provide for their old age, and make due provision for any family they may leave. Such motives are surely both proper and laudable, and if part of such accumulations are to be laid hold of by the State, the result may be a decrease in production, and a serious blow to industry generally.

It has been said that if the Legislature is to interfere with any particular department of the Unearned Increment, it must deal with it in other departments as well. Any such interference, it is shown, would be totally opposed to the principle of natural liberty, and therefore should not be countenanced. But it must be borne in mind, that even Adam Smith, great supporter of natural liberty as he was, recognised certain cases in which, for higher principles, exceptions should be made, the most notable example of which we find in the factory legislation. Such another may have arisen in certain cases with regard to the Unearned Increment, and if the State, on being assured that grievous wrongs exist, can in a measure restore the balance of equity, even in certain departments, without doing injustice to others, then such interference must surely be welcomed by all who place the weal of society before private interests.

J. S.